



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

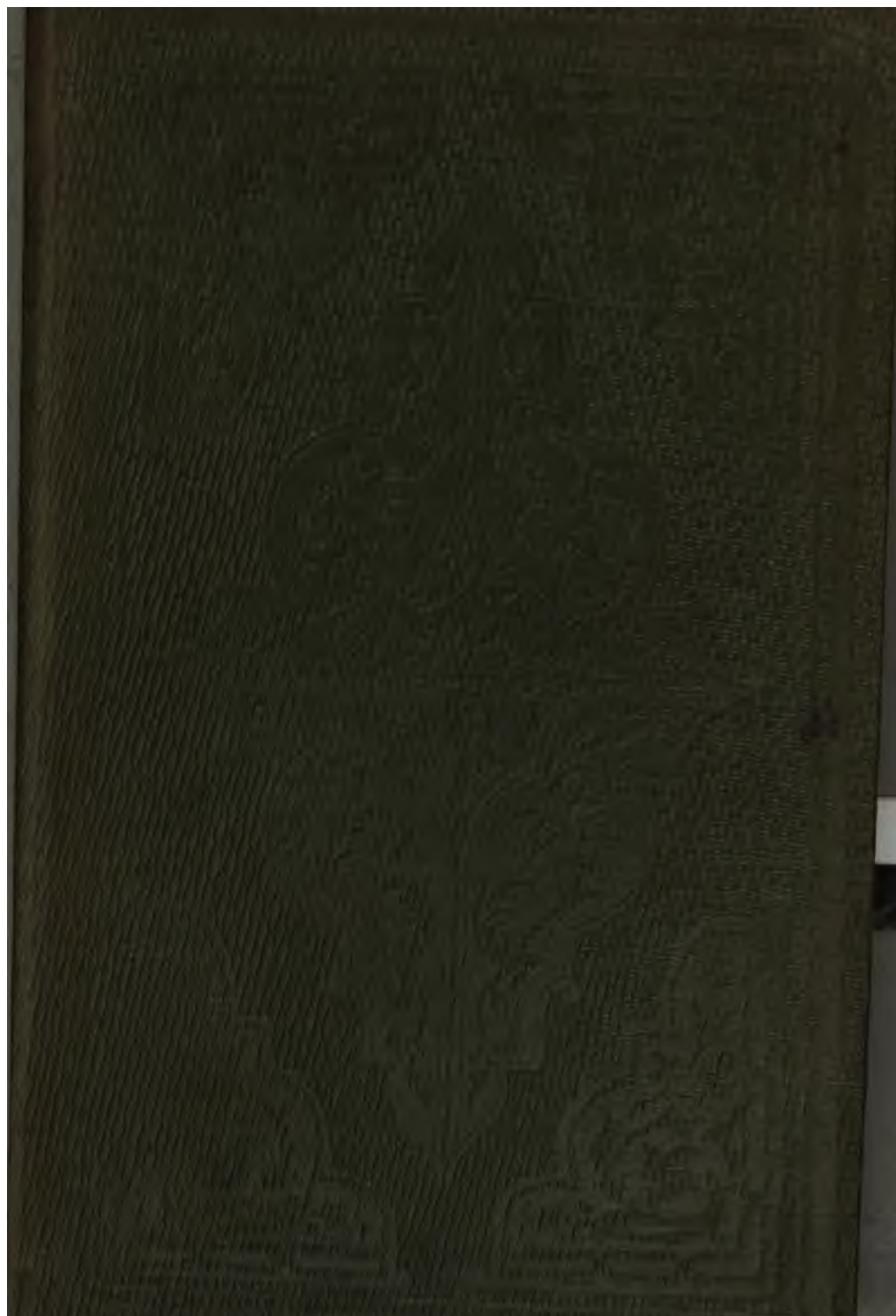
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600053063N



THE FATE OF FOLLY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By LORD B*****

Author of "MASTERS AND WORKMEN," "NAPLES," "WEALTH
AND LABOUR," "THE FARGE OF LIFE," &c.

VOL. II.

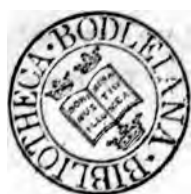
London:

T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1859.

[The right of Translation is reserved.]

249. v. 158.



THE FATE OF FOLLY.

CHAPTER I.

It is an indisputable fact, that more than half the sufferings of our lives, are occasioned by delusions and falsehood. We are deceived by others or we deceive ourselves. We take offence where none is meant, and fancy hatred and enmity where none exist. We are anxious about misfortunes which never come to pass, and grieve for the loss of love, which we possess unconsciously.

Truth, that homely virtue, too humble to be

taught, or even praised in this proud world of luxury ; truth, often veiled by interest, perverted by passion, and forgotten by vice, is a great principle, on which human happiness depends more than any other. Truth in religion, truth in politics, and truth in knowledge, are united inseparably with national greatness ; and the first symptoms of a nation's decline are the prevalence of falsehood, the preference of appearances to reality, and of hypocrisy to virtue, till the whole fabric of society becomes a lie. Truth between man and wife is the surest bond of union ; truth between friend and friend, is the life of their attachment ; and yet more is truth indispensable to the contented tranquillity of our own soul.

Had Vaughan been acquainted with the whole truth of Emma's position, he would have been spared the agony which suspicion occasioned him ; but deceived by false appearances, he passed a night of terrible anguish, after he had left the poor girl standing in the dark before her cottage door, pale, trembling, and dismayed.

Agitated by the wildest feelings of jealousy and indignation, at the deceit which he believed she had practised upon him, whenever her image thus returned before him, his heart relented. He deplored her misconduct as he would the fall of an angel, and his anger gave way to sorrowful regret that their brief and happy intercourse was for ever at an end. Though as morning approached his first passionate excitement somewhat abated, it was replaced by a sullen despair, which made him indifferent to the future.

But action is ever the best cure for such a state of apathy, and anxious to possess the mastery over his own mind, and too strong of purpose to yield for any length of time to the dominion of one idea, the surgeon determined to pursue his usual course of duty on the ensuing day. He had no right, he thought, to leave the sick to suffer or to die, because his hopes had been blighted. He therefore sought to efface, as much as possible, from his person, the traces of the night's sufferings, by copious ablutions and a

careful toilet, before he set off on his round of medical visits.

A man whose profession entails obvious duties, daily to be pursued, has a vast advantage over him, who free from all restraint, has none but desultory occupations, which can readily be laid aside in pleasure or in suffering; yet even Vaughan could not banish by occupation the remembrance of the events of the last fortnight from his mind, and even whilst prescribing for his patients, there was a dull gnawing pain at his heart as of a great grief.

In the course of the day he had to pass Emma's cottage; it was a hard trial, and he did not once look up at the white curtained windows, which seen from afar, had latterly been the favourite object of his contemplation. He turned his head away from the door, where Emma had parted from him, but her image was still before his sight.

It was sad, he thought, that a creature so fair and gentle should be false; but all women were so, and he only had been to blame in supposing

that Miss Saville was exempt from the failings of her sex; he only had to reproach himself for being deceived a second time.

Suddenly, on turning a corner in the lane, his heart began to beat violently, and every fibre of his frame was agitated, for not twenty paces before him he saw Miss Saville rapidly approaching.

He unconsciously became pale as a corpse. Not once did he again turn his eyes towards her till they were scarcely a foot from each other. Then, involuntarily, he cast at her a stern glance of severe reproach, slightly touched his hat and passed on. He knew not whether she had answered his salutation or not, neither did he care, and his indignation was for the time redoubled. Yet amidst all this whirlwind of passion he had a strong curiosity to ascertain the real history of Captain Saville.

The figure he had seen at Nanny's cottage he could no longer suppose to have been an apparition. He was now convinced that it was his early friend, alive once more, though he had at-

tended his funeral. Yet how this man could be identical with the father of little Harry was even a greater mystery than his resurrection from the tomb.

From all he had seen at Red Cliff he believed that Nanny and Robin Charlton could fully explain the whole mystery. But he did not expect to learn anything from them, for aware that Saville had been outlawed for his debts, he felt certain that these old servants, if aware of his return to England, would be incapable of betraying it.

Vaughan strove repeatedly to think that it was of little importance to him whether Saville were alive or dead, but he could not banish the feeling that this man was destined to have a lasting influence over his own destiny.

Once, long ago, he had been the means of disclosing to him the heartlessness of a woman he had engaged to be his wife; the last six years of his life had been embittered by remorse for not having prevented the duel, in which he believed

that Saville had lost his life, and now he had arisen, as from the grave, to blight his fairest hopes. Vaughan was, as we have said, naturally inclined to superstition, and he was more than reasonably depressed by this strange combination of circumstances.

The cottagers wondered at their doctor's unusual gloom, but unable to shake it off, he was returning towards his home, at an unusually early hour, when in the midst of the village street a young lady on horseback, followed by a footman, rode rapidly up to him.

She was probably about eight and twenty, had a showy complexion and fine teeth, and though a little *passée*, was still what is commonly called a fine woman. She sat her horse well, and her broad brimmed hat and feathers, and fashionable riding habit, displayed to advantage both her face and her full and finely rounded figure. No critic could find fault with the former, which was delicately oval, fair and gently aquiline; yet it was not always agreeable, for her eyes were somewhat

too small in proportion to her other features, and they had an expression at times which excited mistrust and an unpleasant feeling, which even her sweetest smiles could not always do away with.

Men generally admired her exceedingly, and she never entertained the slightest doubt of her own surpassing attractions.

Yet Laura Dillon, or as she was commonly called, Lorry Dillon, was near thirty, and unmarried. She said herself that she was difficult to please; but women asserted that though she angled skilfully for admirers, she would wait long before she caught a man whose fortune was large enough to content her ambition and extravagance.

Vaughan at once recognized the dashing equestrian as the cousin of Sir Charles Saville, and the sister of his agent, but as he had not seen her since they parted in anger, and broke off a matrimonial engagement, nearly eight years before, he was much surprised when he saw that she evidently intended to accost him.

She walked her horse close up to him, and throwing the reins to the groom, she sprang lightly to the ground. She then turned to the surgeon, and held out her hand to him, as if they were the best friends in the world.

Though at their separation Vaughan had had great cause to complain of her conduct, he bore her no enmity, and taken by surprise, he shook her hand as cordially as she had offered it.

"This is capital," she exclaimed, laughing to show her beautiful teeth, and holding up her riding habit in the most graceful folds, well knowing that rather more of her delicate foot and ankle was displayed than was admissible in ordinary attire; "I heard yesterday, with infinite pleasure, that you had grown tired of travel, and had settled at Winside, for I knew there was nobody else in the place worth speaking to. I came a few days ago to put Cleve Court in order, for Sir Charles Saville; a horrid nuisance, as you may suppose! but he made a point of it, so here I am, half bored to death already. By the bye, I wonder you knew me, for I must be hor-

ribly altered since we last met, a little lifetime, is it not? But you are just the same, as handsome as ever, Vaughan, but I trust not quite so solemn."

"I believe you will find my character less changed than my features," replied the surgeon, and he smiled, in spite of his sorrow, for quite unconsciously, he was soothed by this woman's flattery.

"Oh, for heaven's sake don't say anything so provoking," she returned; "I want no more love and jealousy, and quarrelling, and all that Spanish sort of nonsense. We are both past that time of life, and why should we not agree to be friends. Though you look so grave just now, you can be amusing when you please, and I want amusement, as I am sure you must also, in this stupid place. But don't be alarmed, I shan't ask you to marry me, only let us be allies."

"I accept the offer," answered Vaughan, "though many men, I believe, would consider it a post of danger, to be Miss Dillon's friend without the hope of her hand."

"Pooh, nonsense," cried the lady, "such silly fools are only fit to beguile an idle hour, but even I lose my patience with these blockheads sometimes, and set some value on a sensible old friend, although, once in a fit of boyish passion, he may have treated me unkindly. But oh, Mr. Vaughan, if, in the course of your life, you have had to do with as many fools as I have, if you have been surfeited by propriety, and piety, and all such humbug, as thoroughly as I have, you will be rejoiced to speak a word of truth, and plain common sense, now and then, with such a blunt and straightforward creature as I am."

"There is little society here of any description," was the only reply, which the surgeon could force himself to make.

"Oh, I know that of old," retorted Lorry, "it was better, when we were formerly all so merry together at Cleve Court. Have you quite forgotten those days, Vaughan?" she enquired with an expressive glance, and a slight touch of the most graceful coquetry in her manner.

Vaughan would have been more than man had he remained entirely unmoved by this attack, but he concealed his annoyance under a forced smile, and replied that forgetfulness was difficult, nay, impossible, for one who had once enjoyed the charms of Miss Dillon's society.

"So you have learnt to flatter," returned Lorry; "but I don't like flattery from you, it sounds so like derision."

"I am sorry that my manner is so unfortunate," was the reply.

"I declare you have become so impertinent, that I am half inclined not to invite you to dine at Cleve Court to-morrow," said the lady, looking the surgeon sharply in the face with her keen grey eyes, "I was charged by Sir Charles to do so; and as I fancy he expects a whole host of dull neighbours to dinner, I am anxious to secure a little agreeable society to myself. I am the bearer of a note to you, and was on my way to deliver it myself at your door; allow me now to present it."

And as Miss Dillon ceased speaking, she drew

a note from a mysterious side pocket, and held it towards Mr. Vaughan.

"I am indebted, I imagine, entirely to you for this attention," he said, "for I have no doubt Sir Charles has forgotten me, and he is not apt to extend such civility to a man in my position."

"What does that signify?" returned Lorry.

"You will find the baronet's card inside, and you must accept it as a visit, and return it, for he calls nowhere in person."

"If Mr. Dillon is to be of the party, I decline the invitation."

"Be perfectly easy on that score. My mother, who is doing the honours of Cleve Court at present, is not fond of her son being much there when she is. My brother is quite a man of business, much more so than when you knew him, and I am always glad when he keeps at home, for there is no flirting comfortably when he is watching every word, with his horrid spectacles glittering on one. But I must be off; I cannot stand chattering here any longer, for I have a

hundred and fifty commissions to perform, so help me on to my horse, and be sure to call at Cleve Court before you come to dinner. By the way," she added, whilst she settled herself on her saddle, "have you heard anything of a niece of Sir Charles Saville's who has come to live in this village? The girl must be half mad, I should think, to bury herself alive in such a dismal hole. Have you seen her by any chance?"

It was well for Vaughan that the horse of Miss Dillon, suddenly frightened by a flock of geese, sprang from him as she ceased speaking, and required all her attention to keep it from running away, or the agitation of the surgeon at her unexpected question, must have excited her astonishment and curiosity. But he had recovered his composure before Lorry had mastered her horse, and anxious to escape from a conversation which, on many accounts, had been most disagreeable to him, he did not wait to be further questioned, but saluting the fair horse-woman whilst she was patting and soothing the

spirited animal, which was impatient to depart, he turned into a narrow path amongst the cottage gardens at the back of the village.

The memory of the past was strangely confused with the feelings of the present as he hurried along, but when, from the top of a rising ground he saw Miss Dillon galloping full speed down the high street of Winside, making what she called a sensation, whilst the dogs barked, the geese cackled, and the old women ran out of their cottages to stare at her, he rejoiced as much as he had once regretted, that by a timely accident he had discovered the heartlessness of this practised coquette, before she completed her triumph by rejecting him. That she had never meant to marry him, he was now fully convinced, and he was also certain that no greater punishment could be inflicted on him than to be cursed with such a wife.

Yet when he had formerly known her, she was exactly the same as now. Vanity and self interest were her leading impulses, though less audaciously displayed, till flattery had confirmed

her self opinion, and habit destroyed every feeling of delicacy, and she at last prided herself on setting all criticism at defiance.

But Vaughan, when a younger man, had been blinded, like many others, by her beauty and vivacity, and pardoned in a young girl the reckless gaiety, which he attributed to the joyousness of inexperienced youth.

But Miss Dillon had never been inexperienced. Born poor, though her father, as a placeman, had a large income, it died with him, and knowing herself to be handsome, she had resolved, even whilst at school, to make a fortune of her beauty. Her widowed mother's genteel poverty, which had compelled them to resort to innumerable paltry arts to keep up appearances in society, had acquainted her early with many forms of deceit, and brought her in contact with people and circumstances of which the wealthy know nothing. Though the cousin of a baronet, her mind was that of an adventuress. Not malicious, nor vindictive, but totally unprincipled, and devoted to dress and amusement,

she was ready to resort to every expedient to obtain them, and money, pleasure, and display were the constant objects of her pursuit. She could smoke, she could drink, she could dance, and she could flirt; in addition to these accomplishments, she could flatter with infinite dexterity, and all and any of these accomplishments she brought into play according to the different characters of the men she designed to fascinate.

But she had a point of weakness which impeded the success of many of her schemes; she had too much vanity to be able long to sacrifice to the vanity of others, and though her conquests had been many, her dominion had usually been short, and the great prize of a wealthy and noble husband, which she had been all her life pursuing, was still to be won.

In the meantime she amused herself according to her taste, and though secretly mortified that she was still single, she pretended that it was by her own choice.

She had been excited latterly to renewed activity by better prospects than she had long

been blest with, and she had at length a match in view, which, if accomplished, would content the wildest dreams of her ambition and her extravagance. The husband she must marry was, in this case, the only part of the bargain she contemplated, which was not to her taste.

Vaughan knew Miss Dillon thoroughly, and when he compared this devotee of luxury, this unprincipled woman of society, who lived in a perpetual state of artificial excitement, with Emma Saville, whose lips had never uttered a word in his hearing which did not prove the purity and elevation of her soul; when he contrasted the different modes of life, and the occupations which both had voluntarily chosen; when he thought of the industry of the one and the idleness of the other, their habits of thought and action were as strongly contrasted as if they belonged to a different age and country.

And was it possible, he thought, that they could yet be alike in falsehood and deceit? For the first time a doubt of the justice of the conclusions he had drawn from Emma's conduct on

the previous night, passed like a flash of light across his mind, and after considering and re-considering the whole circumstances, he half resolved to go to Mr. Ashley, and disclose to him the weight of anguish which oppressed his mind; but he had not courage to do it, and he shrunk from the idea of uttering a syllable which might cast even the shadow of blame upon Miss Saville.

Before he returned to his home that evening, he had formed the sad resolution to remain silent as to the events of the past night, to trust to chance for the elucidation of a mystery he had no right to investigate, and to keep away from the Vicarage as long as possible, so as not only to avoid meeting Emma there, but to escape the pain of hearing her spoken of.

And thus he went on in his delusion, thinking that he was acting justly, whilst he was needlessly inflicting the greatest misery upon himself and the innocent object of his indignation and resentment.

But the sufferings of Emma surpassed those

of the surgeon, for conscious of being treated with injustice, she had no anger to sustain her in supporting it, and unable by action, either to divert her thoughts, or to extricate herself from the difficulties in which she had been involved by the misconduct of another, she could do nothing but endeavour to curb her naturally impetuous feelings, and to wait, impatiently, it is true, but in silence.

She did not shed a tear when Vaughan had passed her bye, though his look of reproach gave her the keenest anguish.

It is frequently the effect of a great sorrow to stun the faculties by its severity, and the girl, after that meeting, seemed less conscious of pain, and like one in a dream, she made the preparations necessary for little Harry's removal to the Vicarage.

Even the loss of the boy affected her less than she had anticipated, and when all was over, and she had kissed and blest him, as she left him in Mr. Ashley's care, it was a relief to her to sit down quite alone in her desolate parlour, and

think over without interruption all that had happened to her since her arrival at Winside.

Happiness, great happiness, and the anticipation of a future brighter than the past had been, had suddenly broken like a ray of sunshine upon her. She had given her heart, unasked, it was true, and yet she felt a perfect assurance that she was beloved. Then came the conviction that if she really and truly was as dear to Vaughan as he was to her, there was still hope! Chance might bring the circumstances to light, she thought, which she could not reveal.

Somewhat tranquillized by this idea, she endeavoured to resume her usual occupations, but her heart was heavy, and the hours for that and many succeeding days, went slowly and sorrowfully along.

CHAPTER II.

MR. ASHLEY did not fail to remark the melancholy of Miss Saville, and attributing it to her separation from her little ward, brought the boy frequently to her cottage; but he was surprised to find that all his efforts to persuade her to walk into the fields, or to visit him at the Vicarage, were equally vain. She could not overcome the fear of meeting Vaughan; and yet she longed to see him, and she would wait for hours, concealed near her window, to catch a glimpse of him as he passed along the road beneath.

Time passed on, and she was sitting alone,

sorrowfully reviewing the many sad events of her short life, which had ended by leaving her without one domestic tie, in a remote village, without pleasure in the present or hope in the future, when she was alarmed by hearing a man's voice in the kitchen, and then heavy steps approaching the parlour door.

But her anxiety was soon relieved by the appearance of Robin Charlton, who, softly opening the door, demanded her permission to enter.

"You'll excuse me, Miss Saville," he said, taking off the old hat which covered his Welsh wig, "for I have not come to seek a bed nor any charity, but just to pay my respects to you. I have scarcely seen you since you came to Winside, and if it is not too bold to say so, I should like to know how you are getting on, so lonesome as you are."

Emma, shaking hands with the old pedlar, gave him a kind greeting, and asked him to sit down and rest awhile, till her maid prepared the supper for the family, which he must stay and partake of.

"Well, well, Miss Emma," he replied, "I always did sit down when your father was alive, so I will make no difficulty, particularly as I want to have a little private talk with you."

Emma looked earnestly at the old man; the expression of his face was very grave, and there was something in the tone of his voice, which recalled the strange scene she had witnessed on the night of her father's death. Confused shadows of the story recounted to the dying, and only heard indistinctly through her broken sleep, passed rapidly across her mind, like images of another life; but strange to say, she now understood them better than when the words first fell upon her ear, and she felt that the rough old pedlar was probably possessed of secrets on which her destiny might depend.

There was a keen twinkle in Robin's eyes, which confirmed this suspicion.

"You are very lonely here, Miss," he said, glancing keenly round the room; "you'll be missing your father sadly; and the boy, too, I hear has left you. You ladies, when you

don't marry for money, have many trials; thrust out of the company you were born to, just for the want of a little money. But never mind, my dear, you are better off than many who go flaunting in their coaches, and you are loved by truer hearts than most people, though you may little think it. But I have been trusted with many secrets in my time."

"I know it, Robin," she replied. "I heard strange things on the night of my father's death."

"You heard, Miss!" cried the old man with surprise.

"Yes, Robin. I suspect you know more concerning the affairs of me and my family than I do myself."

"Well, Miss Emma, I have known you ever since you were born," answered the old man, with a kind smile. "I was a soldier in your father's regiment before that time, and I knew something about his quarrel with his brother, the baronet, and then Sir Charles's own son got into trouble, and before the Major went to India,

he gave his nephew good advice, and recommended me to be his servant. But it was little I could do to help the wild young man, and his last scrape was the worst, so I was thrown on the world again, and you and my old master were far away, so I began the little trade I now carry on. Yet I grieved for Mister Frank, for when he married such a sweet creature as Miss Lucy, I have no doubt he would have reformed entirely, but the baronet, when he found it out, was furious that he should have disgraced the family by marrying a country parson's daughter. The worthy gentleman just cursed his son for the sin of matrimony; for, said he, the girl would have followed him without, and where was the use of tying himself to a wife without family or fortune."

"Money could be of no consequence, to the only son of Sir Charles Saville," said Emma.

"Though these proud gentlemen talk so much about family, you will always find that money is included under that name," said the pedlar, with a knowing twinkle of his merry eyes.

"They never lose sight of the main chance, and if the Captain had married an heiress, Sir Charles would never have asked who her father was. But the poor young fellow got desperate at last, and had to fly the country. One who called himself his best friend was the main cause of his ruin. Pretty friendship, eh? that's the world. A man knows his enemies, but he does not always know his friends! the fellow is pleasant and plausible, but cunning as a fox, and your relation, as well as his, so take care, Miss Saville, for the same gentleman makes you very civil speeches."

"You mean Mr. Dillon, I suppose," replied the girl.

"Just so," answered Robin, nodding his head, "I am glad you have some suspicion of him."

"Well, but go on with your story, Robin. Have you ever seen my cousin, since he went abroad?"

"To tell you the truth, Miss, I went with him. I was there at the duel!"

"And at his death, and burial?" eagerly demanded Emma.

"You know, from the evidence of your own eyes, Miss, that he is neither dead nor buried," replied the old man, with a grim smile. "I may just as well tell you all, for you won't repeat it, I know. The poor Captain was no match for Dillon, who came determined to kill him, and he left him for dead, escaping to England without losing a moment. Saville had taken the news of his wife's death so sadly to heart, that though I came just time enough to save his life, he did not care what became of him. He knew he could not show his face in his own country, and he wanted to get clear of his enemies, so he made me spread about a report that he was dead and we buried him, just two days after I had got him safely on board a Dutch ship, bound for India, where the surgeon attended to his wounds."

"And Mr. Vaughan was present at the funeral?" inquired Emma eagerly.

"Just so," answered the pedlar. "My

master wrote to ask him to come and be his second in the duel, but the surgeon was detained till it was all over, and my young master thought that Vaughan bore him enmity about something that had passed between them, and would have nothing more to do with him, and that made him desperate. So it was well I was there, to manage matters. Nanny and I had got him his boy from England before that, so he soon sailed for India, where by good luck he went with your father, who managed to get him a commission, under a false name."

"I knew him only as Captain Arnold," returned Emma; "for my father concealed from me that we were relatives, till a few weeks before his death."

"He told you the truth, then no doubt, for the child's sake," said Robin. "He was anxious to give you his evidence, that Harry might not lose his birthright. It is a strange story, but it is stranger still, that this wild young fellow should have lived through all his dangers, to be a trouble to you, just when the father, who could

have protected you, is dead and gone. It is a bitter grief to me, Miss Saville, for though I would do anything reasonable to serve him, as your father desired me, yet I can do nothing that might injure you. You are just like one of the regiment, for you were born when we were on a march in Canada, and your mother, good lady, used to call me the head nurse, I was so handy in those matters, and I am not going to stand bye now, and see either you, or your good name ruined by any wild young Captain that ever lived."

"But what should make you suppose that either I or my good name are in any danger?" demanded Emma.

"I'll tell you the whole truth," answered the old man. "The Captain is living down at Nanny's cottage, and you know it, and so that is no secret. He was kept in the house many weeks with a bad sprain, but this week he has got out again, and as I saw he was going on in his old rash way, I have just followed him, for fear any mischief happened to him. But one

night last week, to my surprise, I saw him go round to the back of your house and get over the garden wall. I cannot climb nimbly, since I had a ball in my knee, so I went away to look for a ladder, when, as I was coming back, I saw you let him out at the front door. Mr. Vaughan stood close by, and I had little doubt some mischief would come of it all. And to be sure the surgeon has been down to the Red Cliff, one day when I was out, and made so many enquiries about the Captain that Nanny was very near letting the secret out. I've heard too that little Harry, who is no doubt the Captain's child, is gone to the Vicarage, and so I thought I'd just come up and tell you all I know, and see if I could help you in any way. You see, Miss Emma, it was not a very pleasant thing to have such a man seen coming out of your house at midnight, and Mr. Vaughan is sadly changed since the night it happened."

"Mr. Ashley was in the house with me," answered Emma eagerly. "If Mr. Vaughan had come in he might have seen that Saville came

without my knowledge; but as he consented to leave Harry in the Vicar's care, both he and I have promised secrecy as to all that passed."

"Then I don't know what can be done," said the pedlar. "It is a cruel case, for Vaughan is as good and honourable a gentleman as ever lived, and since you and he have been so much together I have kept a watchful eye over him, and I believe it gives him great pain to have any cause of suspicion against you. He knew the Captain again, you may depend upon it, and he knows his character pretty well too, for he was jilted once for him by that flirt Miss Dillon, and so you cannot wonder if he is rather suspicious of the women folk. 'A burnt bairn dreads the fire,' as they say in the north."

"I cannot blame him," was all that Emma could reply.

"I hope nothing worse may happen," returned Robin, "for I suppose Saville was trying to carry off the boy again, and he is raving about him, and you too, Miss, for that matter. You had better be on your guard against him, though he

is not a bad hearted man; but he knows no measure when he loves a body, and it is hard to say whether he loves you or his boy the most. He has strong passions, and he lets nothing stand in the way when he is determined to gratify them. I heard him tell Nanny yesterday that he would sooner be taken and tried for his life than give you up, that he had sworn to make you marry him, and that if you did not you should have cause to repent your obstinacy. I thought after that it was only right to come and put you on your guard."

"Oh, that is all nonsense, Robin," said the girl, though she shuddered as she spoke; "you know that Captain Saville was never very steadfast in his purposes; he is vehement, but not firm enough to be dreaded, and we live in a free country, where no man can force a woman to marry him against his will."

"That's true; but still, my dear, you are very unprotected," said the pedlar. "I don't like your living in this lone house. The Captain has got in once, and he might get in again."

"I must have a dog then," answered the lady, quietly.

"It would help you very little," said Robin in the same tone. "It would not prevent evil reports; but I'll tell you what you ought to do, you must just write a civil letter to your uncle, at Cleve Court, and get him to take you to live with him. It is very certain, his son won't trouble you, when you are under the old Baronet's roof."

"I have already written," returned Emma, "and I am daily expecting an answer."

"You'll have one soon, no doubt," replied the pedlar, "for a sneaking fellow, who lives at Cleve Court, Mr. Ned Cranbourne, has been making many inquiries about you in the village; so when the Baronet has got over the fatigues of his journey, and has asked questions enough about you, why then, I think, it very likely you may hear something from him. His valet is a friend of mine, and he says that Sir Charles is much flattered that the Major named him your guardian. He likes to be everybody's

master, though every knave that flatters well can turn him round their finger, but particularly if they wear petticoats. No doubt you've heard of Miss Dillon?"

"Oh, yes, we are distant cousins," returned Emma.

"I wonder greatly, what you'll think of her, when you meet," said the old man, with an expressive smile.

"And what do you think of her, Robin?" demanded the girl with some curiosity.

"What matters, what an old fellow like me thinks of a fine lady," answered the pedlar, with a sly leer. "But if you want to know, I'll just tell you, she's the vainest flirt within the four seas. She'll be kind enough to you, if you don't stand in her way, but her tongue has no law, where she takes a spite, yet she's better than her brother for all that, for though there's not much goodness lost between them, she is the honestest rascal of the two, and she pleases most people, till she is contradicted."

"And she is now at Cleve Court," asked the

lady, who was interested in Robin's description.

"Yes," he replied, "she is come there with her mother, a poor painted, vain old body, to do the honours as they call it, but the daughter's principal object is just to marry the old Baronet, if she can get him. So you'll see a great deal, if you go to Cleve Court."

A knock at the street door here interrupted the flow of Robin's eloquence, and almost immediately afterwards, the maid entered with a note, which she gave her mistress, saying, that the servant who had brought it was waiting for an answer.

Emma saw that it was sealed with her uncle's arms, and eagerly opened it, and read it without loss of time. Its contents were as follows:—

"Sir Charles Saville presents his compliments to Miss Saville. He had the honour to receive her letter, informing him of his brother's death, which it would be hypocrisy in him to say, that he regrets. They had disagreed frequently, and as Major Saville never thought proper to make

Sir Charles any apology for his very unjustifiable behaviour, Sir Charles is considerably astonished by his appointing him Miss Saville's guardian. But, Sir Charles admits, it was the wisest thing he ever did, Sir Charles being the head of the family of Saville, as ancient and honourable a family as any in England. Yet Major Saville would never admit this, nor avail himself of his brother's influence at the Horse Guards, although he could command three votes in the House of Commons, and never having asked for a peerage for himself, could have provided, by his influence, for fifty younger brothers; but he despised interest, relied upon his own merits, and suffered accordingly.

“If Miss Saville is more sensible of the duties which relationship imposes on her, Sir Charles is willing to receive her into his house, as his ward and niece; but should she have imbibed her father's radical and independent principles, he regrets that he will feel obliged after a short trial, to withdraw his support. Sir Charles' carriage will be before Miss Saville's door to-

morrow at four o'clock, to bring her to Cleve Court, to remain till she and Sir Charles become acquainted with each other.

"Cleve Court, Tuesday."

"Robin," said Emma, when she had concluded this epistle, "you are quite right. This is an invitation to Cleve Court, but written in such a style that I feel no inclination to accept it."

"Oh, nonsense, nonsense! Your father wished it, and you must go," answered the old man. "Now the Captain is come back to torment you it is the best way to be safe from him. I take the liberty of giving my advice, though I am a queer counsellor for a young lady, but you have no other, except Mr. Ashley, and he does not know your affairs as well as I do, so I just speak plain. I must be so free as to tell you that you are too young to be living here by yourself, even if there was no other gentleman in the neighbourhood to be falling in love with you but Mr. Vaughan. Since the Captain is come—in plain language, it is very improper, and if a poor fellow like me thinks so, you may be sure that

all the old wives in the village will have something to say on the subject. So write your answer, my dear, and go to Cleve Court as soon as you can. It may not be agreeable, but it is better than being here all alone, and I am sure Mr. Vaughan will think you have done quite right; but may be his opinion would have no weight with you," added the pedlar, and he cast up a sly glance at Emma's blushing face.

She made him no reply till she had finished a note to her uncle, expressing her gratitude for his invitation, and promising to be ready at the hour he had appointed. When this was sealed and sent away she turned with a pleasant smile to the old man, and told him she had followed his advice.

"I go to Cleve Court to-morrow," she added, "and shall, I hope, thus escape a second interview with my cousin Frank. It is fortunate that little Harry is already at the Vicarage, as I am thus at liberty to leave home; and many things may happen before the end of the month, which Captain Saville has agreed to leave him there."

“Well, my dear, it is a great relief to my mind that you will soon be under proper protection,” said the pedlar, arising. “Only, when you get out of the Captain’s way, don’t fall into Dillon’s clutches. Now your uncle acts as your guardian get him to look after your money as soon as you can, for your father trusted all his business to Dillon, and I am much mistaken if your affairs are in such good order as they ought to be. I cannot say I have much faith in trustees, for in these times fine showy gentlemen like Mr. Dillon cannot handle money without itching to pocket it. Women and children are in a bad position when they want trustees and guardians, just like silly sheep, with a wolf for the shepherd.”

“I hope that amongst men of Mr. Dillon’s class there is more honesty than you give them credit for,” returned Emma, smiling.

“Don’t trust them, my dear,” said Robin. “They are all striving one against another who shall be finest, and then to pay their debts they begin speculating and gambling with other

people's money. To my thinking, they might as well be common thieves at once, for there is no thief can put his hand so deep in your pocket as a gentleman does, particularly if he is a banker, or a trustee, or a railway director. And they are all well brought up, these gentlemen; but it seems there is no school any where to teach men honesty."

"What you say of Mr. Dillon," rejoined the girl, "recalls to me my father's attempt to burn his will."

"It won't make much difference, if Sir Charles does his duty," was the pedlar's reply. "But I fear he won't, for he leaves all his business to Dillon, and he'll one day or another have reason to repent it, or I am much mistaken. But good night, Miss Saville," he added, "I have to walk down to the ferry before I go to Nanny's cottage, and its getting late."

"Your supper waits you in the kitchen," returned Emma.

"Well, I'll take a plateful of porridge before I go," said the old man, "but just let me tell

you not to come to the Red Cliff, till I let you know that all is safe in that quarter, and then—let me think—yes—that will do. If you are in any trouble, or want to see me on any account, just lay three white stones on the pillar of the garden gate at Cleve, going into the lane near the fish pond. When I see them, I'll wait for you in the oak plantation on the opposite side of the road, if I have to sit there four and twenty hours. Lord bless you, and keep you out of bad hands!"

These were Robin's last words, and having shaken his young mistress by the hand, he went into the kitchen to eat his supper, and left Emma to make the necessary preparations for her removal to Cleve Court on the morrow.

CHAPTER III.

THE sun was still above the horizon when Robin Charlton resumed his walk. His way lay for some distance through the plantations of Cleve Court, and afterwards across pleasant meadows, to the river side. He had agreed to meet his friend, the valet of Sir Charles Saville, under pretence of bringing him a bottle of smuggled brandy; but with the intention of learning from him as much as possible what was going on at the great house since the arrival of the family. He knew the man's time was precious, and was, therefore, anxious not to be after his appoint-

ment; he spoke to no one, and trudged on as quickly as his lame leg permitted him, along the narrow path. But just as he passed the garden gate, where he told Emma to lay the pebbles, greatly to his annoyance, Mr. Cranbourne came up the lane, with the jerking gait usual to him when his head was very full of news, and he was eager to acquire more.

"Oh, Robin," he cried, "you are the very fellow I wanted to see. The baronet is taking his nap after dinner, and Miss Dillon is riding her high horse with Lieutenant Black, a young puppy from the barracks, so I have not a soul to speak to—regularly bored to death; but you always know everything that is passing, my old fellow; lots of news—most amusing life yours. I've half a mind to turn pedlar myself. You have the liberty to poke your nose into every house in the county, and to carry off a bit of intelligence from each of them; a capital way to get at domestic secrets. Upon my soul, I envy you."

"I am very proud, sir; but is that all you

have to tell me?" asked the old man with a most impassive countenance.

"Tell you! I have nothing to tell you, absolutely nothing. I'm as dry as a parish well in the dog days. I want you to tell me something, old fellow!" cried Cranbourne eagerly. "Something amusing, to make Sir Charles laugh when he awakes. 'Cranbourne, my friend,' he said, before he fell asleep, 'your wit is absolutely defunct. The air of Cleve has stifled it.' Ever since then, I have been straining my faculties to say something very clever, but the more I strain, the stupider I get."

"That's very likely," said Robin, with a sly smile.

"Well, but is there no old woman in the village has broken her leg?" persisted the parasite. "Is there no murder of the innocents? Is there no scandal about Miss Saville worth repeating? Is there nothing more about the gentleman who nearly ran the Vicar through the body when he interfered to prevent his carrying the lady and her little ward off in a coach and four?"

"Bless you, sir, I never heard a word about anything of the kind," said Robin quietly.

"But it is all true, upon my word of honor," returned Cranbourne. "The barber, who came over from Winside this morning, told me all about it. I perfectly remember I heard the screams myself, in the neighbourhood of the Vicarage, and I hear Mr. Ashley's wounds are dangerous."

"All a lie, sir," said the pedlar. "I saw the Vicar an hour ago, as well as you are."

"And Miss Saville?"

"Is just sitting, as usual, in her own parlour, quite comfortable."

"And the stranger, who wanted to carry her and the boy off?" demanded Ned.

"He may be at Jericho for anything I know to the contrary," answered the old man, laughing.

"And the coach and four?"

"Is probably at the same place, for there has not been one seen in Winside since Sir Charles's father's wedding," returned Robin.

“Very extraordinary, upon my word,” said Cranbourne, rubbing his wrinkled hands together and casting his eyes more outward than usual. “I am delighted I have met you, for I shall now be able to contradict the whole report. I related the tale at dinner, and it made quite a sensation, and now I shall have the satisfaction of contradicting it. That is better than confirmation. Confirmation is dull! no variety; but contradict! excellent! no one believes you—no one ever does believe the contradiction of a lie! But no matter, it helps conversation.”

“The schoolmaster’s cat has kittened,” replied the pedlar, “and as there are only five little ones, the Vicar intends to cut one in two, that he may take tythe,” said the old man, slily.

“I could tell you a greater piece of news than that, a wonderful piece of news. I learnt it at the Vicarage, but mum is the word,” and Ned laid his finger on his nose in a manner meant to be very expressive. “I hear all, and say nothing; but Sir Charles would not sleep much

more this night were I to show him a little note I have in my pocket. But I am too diplomatic for that. The time may come for disclosures, but it is well to have a secret. Knowledge is power, and a secret certainly is. So I am glad to think I have my secret all to myself, Mr. Robin. I was rather afraid of you, for that Sims, the barber, said to me this very morning, there is nothing passing in the whole county that Robin Charlton does not know. He is a perfect walking gazette! But I am beforehand with you this time, I am happy to find."

"It seems so," answered the old man.

"Yes, and this news is so remarkable," rejoined Cranbourne, "that I confess I feel it dreadfully difficult to hold my tongue. I should uncommonly like to see how people would stare at the intelligence; but like a clever diplomatist, I must make the most I can of an important discovery."

"Much out of nothing, I suppose you mean," was Robin's reply. "I think you said you had the news in your pocket?"

"Yes, it is a real autograph; a written document not to be disputed; positive evidence of an incredible fact!" said the parasite, with great importance.

"And you got it at the Vicarage, I think you told me?" demanded the pedlar.

"Did I tell you so?" asked Cranbourne, in perplexity. "Upon my soul, I had forgot that! If I said so, I did not intend it. I did not mean—in fact, I meant a totally different thing. Upon my word I did."

"Very probable!" replied Robin. "It is very much the fashion to say one thing and mean another. So, may be, you have no letter, and you did not get it at the Vicarage, and there is no secret worth keeping, after all?"

At each phrase which the pedlar uttered Cranbourne waved his head, and grinned most significantly, as if anxious to confirm what he had before uttered, only dissenting from the last words, for he was unwilling to renounce the importance he attached to the possession of a secret."

"I suppose you have seen Miss Saville," he said, now anxious to turn the subject; "from all I have heard of her strange doings I fear she must be half mad."

"She is more likely to turn other people's heads than to have anything wrong in her own," responded Robin drily; "for I can tell you she is as clever and pretty a young lady as any in the three kingdoms, be she who she may. You had better take care of your heart, if she comes to Cleve; and she might be a good speculation for you, too, for I have heard you have rather an eye to the purse in the way of courtship."

"That I can positively contradict," replied Cranbourne, with infinite importance. "Miss Saville will get nothing from her uncle, you may depend upon that, so she need not come to Cleve to fish for the Baronet's inheritance."

"Dear me, that is strange news, when she is the next heir," said the old man.

"Ah! next heir," retorted Ned, "that remains to be proved. But if ever there should be a trial, let the parties come to me. Remem-

ber that, Robin! I have evidence, most convincing evidence."

"But what, in the name of fortune, is your evidence about?" inquired the Pedlar, keenly examining the face of his companion.

"Something you would give a year's profits to know," was the reply. "But, you need not expect to get the secret out of me. I am a little too diplomatic for that. But Robin, just stop with me a minute or two longer," he added, taking the old man by the button, when he perceived him moving off. "I want you to tell me a thing or two; you, who know everything, and who have served the family of Saville so long. How comes it that the dashing Miss Dillon has waited so long for a husband?"

"Are you thinking of taking pity on her, Mr. Cranbourne?" asked the Pedlar, with a sly glance at the diminutive and shrivelled person of his companion.

"That is a joke," he replied, though he did not think so; "I cannot marry any girl older than twenty-two, or with less than ten thousand

pounds. I have made many enquiries and I cannot discover that Lorry Dillon has a sixpence."

"I am afraid you are neither rich nor old enough for her; she'll be looking higher."

"You have hit it," answered Cranbourne, "but we diplomatists must be very cautious. But just tell me, did you never hear anything about certain old flirtations of this young lady?"

"Oh, sir! I've heard so much on that subject, there is no remembering the particulars," cried the old Pedlar.

"Yes; but, Robin, my good fellow," persisted Cranbourne, "you have a capital memory for your neighbours' affairs. I don't mean to flatter you, but it is a fact," and he slipped a shilling into the Pedlar's hand as he spoke.

"You like to buy things cheap I think, sir," said Robin, looking at the coin as it lay on his open hand, with no very respectful expression.

"No, by no means," answered Cranbourne quickly, and rather confused, for he was afraid that for once his economy had been misplaced.

"I am quite willing to pay well for anything

worth hearing, so there is half-a-crown for you, and now tell me at once who were Miss Dillon's lovers, before I came to live at Cleve?"

"Well, really, sir; she had so many," rejoined the old man adjusting his Welsh wig.

"But the favoured one? the gentleman who won her heart?"

"Sir, in my humble opinion, she had no heart to be won," said Robin drily. "She was, as you say, too diplomatic for that. But to my certain knowledge she was almost engaged to Captain Frank Saville before he was more than twenty, and to his friend Mr. Vaughan at the same time."

"Ah! now you have hit it, my old fellow; go on, go on," cried Cranbourne triumphantly, "and there was something about a letter, was not there?"

"Yes," returned the Pedlar, "an awkward business. Saville was a wild lad, and, knowing his father would never consent to his marrying Miss Dillon, he made desperate love and tried to persuade her to run off to Gretna Green; when

she directed a letter to him, which was meant for his rival, Mr. Vaughan, and when he read it he found that the flirt was just playing the same game with his friend, and most likely laughing at them both. Well, there was the very deuce to do amongst them all you may suppose; though the Baronet knew nothing about it, but the two gentlemen made up the quarrel, and left the lady in the lurch. So now you have the whole story, and if you can make any use of it you are welcome, for I believe Sir Charles is the only person in the neighbourhood that is ignorant of it."

"I was never told the particulars of it before," returned Cranbourne.

"I suppose the people thought it was no concern of yours," was the pedlar's caustic reply. "But you are a meddlesome body, Mr. Cranbourne, and I should advise you not to handle hot iron. That Lorry Dillon is more than a match for ten such as you, and if she is determined to marry Sir Charles, it is not you that can hinder her," so saying, he quietly removed

the fingers of Mr. Cranbourne, from his button, and walked quickly down the lane.

Ned stood for some minutes after the old man had disappeared, tapping his boots with his walking stick, perfectly lost in wonder at the extent of his own diplomatic powers. His brain was nevertheless in a very puzzled state, for though by one means, or another, he had learnt everything about everybody, he had no clear idea, how to make use of his knowledge, for his own advantage.

Of one thing, however, he was certain, that to maintain his own position at Cleve Court, to eat at the Baronet's table, to ride in the Baronet's carriage, and to drink the Baronet's wine, in short to enjoy all the advantages of twenty thousand a year, while his own income was scarcely a hundred, it was absolutely necessary, in some way or another, to prevent Miss Dillon becoming Sir Charles Saville's wife, and though she was too powerful for him to venture an open declaration of war, he had cunning enough to devise numerous little plans for her

defeat, in what he considered, a diplomatic way.

Such an enemy is never to be despised, and was likely to be particularly dangerous to Miss Dillon, who with all her arts of coquetry, was too dashing and vain, to take notice of anything so contemptible as Mr. Ned Cranbourne, except by turning him into ridicule.

On the following afternoon, whilst Ned Cranbourne was sauntering along the fragrant terraces of the flower gardens, and wondering how long he should be able to maintain his supremacy at Cleve Court, and have power to dictate to the housekeeper, he was startled from his reverie by a sharp clap upon the back, and looking round he encountered the spectacles of Mr. Dillon staring full upon him.

The lawyer was dressed with more than usual care, and seemed in high spirits.

“Good morning to you, Ned,” he said, “are you brooding over a new treaty of alliance with the cook, or inventing some dish to rival that coxcombical humbug, the Vattel of our day?”

"I was just thinking it was time to go in and dress for dinner," answered the little man pettishly, "you almost knocked me down, Mr. Dillon."

"I beg your pardon, I had no such intention," was the lawyer's reply, "but dinner is half an hour later to-day than usual, as I understand. I have been invited to meet a large party. But I need not tell you this, for you ordered the dinner, of course."

"Sir Charles never deposes that task to anyone," was Ned's answer.

"Ah, Ned, but you are prime minister, and as great friends with the housekeeper as ever, I have no doubt," retorted Dillon. "My mother is idle, and would not encroach on your authority I know, and though my sister Lorry is too careless to thwart you, be on your guard, for you will soon have a more dangerous enemy in the household. My ward, Miss Saville, is expected at Cleve to-day."

"But she cannot marry her uncle," said Ned, silyly.

"What the deuce do you mean by that," asked the lawyer, with that smiling superiority, with which he always treated the Baronet's humble companion; "who would ever think of Miss Saville taking such an old fellow, even if he were not within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity?"

"Some girls don't object to old gentlemen, when they have titles and large fortunes. Do you think Miss Dillon would?"

"What have my sister's tastes to do with Miss Saville?" demanded Dillon sharply. "You talk greater nonsense than ever, Ned!"

"Perhaps I do," answered the little man meekly, "and perhaps not," he added, in so low a tone that the words were lost in the sound of carriage wheels, which drove rapidly up to the entrance of the mansion near which they were standing.

Cranbourne rose on his tiptoes to catch a glimpse of the lady who was in it. He saw enough to decide that she was exceedingly pretty.

“ Ah, Miss Saville!” cried Dillon, advancing as soon as the carriage door was opened, to assist his fair cousin to alight. “ I am delighted to see you, and especially delighted to see you here. Mr. Edward Cranbourne—Miss Saville.”

Ned bowed.

“ Allow me to supply the place of Sir Charles, who, I am sure, is not aware of your arrival,” said the little man obsequiously, and he hastened forward to offer to conduct her into the house.

But Dillon intercepted him, and drawing Emma’s arm through his, he looked round at him with a contemptuous sneer, and led her into the great hall.

They found the drawing room empty, for every one had gone to dress, and Dillon, perceiving that Emma was hurt by such a reception, endeavoured to amuse her by that gay and witty conversation of which he was a perfect master, till a servant appeared with a very polite message from Sir Charles. He regretted that he was unexpectedly engaged, and hoped that Miss Saville would make herself perfectly at home,

till they met in the drawing room before dinner.

“He is waiting for his new wig, which was to come down by the railway,” whispered Ned in Dillon’s ear. “It is a secret, but I have no doubt of it.”

Emma was then conducted to the bed room assigned to her, in the best part of the house, where she found an abigail awaiting, who had been appointed to attend on her. In fact, it appeared that Sir Charles having once consented to receive her, had decided to treat her in every way with the respect due to his heiress and next of kin.

CHAPTER III.

EMMA felt like a stranger in the home of her forefathers when she thus returned to Cleve, alone and desolate, without one whom she had known and loved, to give her an affectionate greeting. She even shed tears when she thought of little Harry, and of Vaughan, whose regard was probably lost to her for ever.

Wealth and luxury could not console her for the want of the best affections, and it was with a heavy heart and no slight degree of trepidation that she heard the great bell ring, which summoned her to the drawing room.

She saw as she descended that guests had


already arrived, and when the door was thrown open, and her name announced, more than a dozen persons were assembled there.

The hum of conversation was at once silent as she entered, and every eye was fixed upon her tall and graceful figure, as, modestly, yet with perfect self possession, she paused after advancing a few steps, and looked around, to ascertain if any one she knew was present.

Almost instantly a tall, meagre old man, who bore a striking resemblance to her father, though of more advanced years, and wanting that dignity which intellect alone can give, advanced courteously towards her.

His wig, as Cranbourne had intimated, was fresh from the barber's hands, and his dress was perfect in its simplicity.

Sir Charles Saville's first glance at his niece had convinced him that she would not disgrace him; and feeling rather proud of so beautiful a relative, he received her with an urbanity of manner well calculated to conceal the want of genuine feeling.



He then presented her to his cousin, Mrs. Dillon, an elderly lady of fair but faded complexion, wearing a beautiful set of false teeth, a profusion of very long and expansive ringlets, a quantity of rouge, a perfect cloud of flounces and frills about her petticoats, though her withered neck and arms had no other covering than a rather thick coat of pearl powder. Her eyes were dim, but her cheeks had the roses of youth, and her teeth were faultless.

She cast a sweet glance at Sir Charles, as if she still considered herself fascinating, and then, with a charming smile, extended her well gloved hand to his neice.

"I am delighted, Miss Saville, to see you here," she said, with marked emphasis. "My daughter will be charmed to be introduced to you, we have so few near relatives."

Emma bowed.

"It gives me much pleasure," was all she could reply, and she followed the direction of Mrs. Dillon's eyes towards her saucy daughter, who was standing laughing and talking in rather

a loud voice, to a party of officers, at the further end of the room.

The young lady had put her glass to her eye, and was staring at Emma with the most supreme assurance, whilst she continued to talk of the last county ball, as if unconscious of any thing else that was passing in the room.

Mrs. Dillon was annoyed, for she saw that Sir Charles looked towards her with evident displeasure, but Lorry knew perfectly well what she was about. She did not care for merely keeping the old man in good humour; she was determined to secure him as a husband. She rather suspected that her mother had the same object in view, but so confident was she in the attractions of youth and beauty, and so convinced was she of her own superior skill and talent, that she let Mrs. Dillon amuse herself, without feeling the least jealousy, well knowing that her sweet adulation would be utterly useless when put in competition with her own tormenting, chaffing, flattering coquetry. She was determined to make the Baronet her slave, both before matrimony and

after it, and she had been greatly annoyed by his persisting in inviting Miss Saville to his house, in defiance of her declared displeasure, and her wicked temper so far got the better of her prudence, that even now, when she was the guest of the Baronet, she could not conceal her ill-humour.

Two words and a sharp look from her brother, as he took her hand to present her to Emma, made Miss Dillon feel the folly of showing her discontent, and she affected the greatest cordiality whilst addressing her fair cousin.

Sir Charles, who saw this, gave Lorry a smile of approbation, which convinced her it would be a great mistake to show any want of civility to his niece. She therefore shook her cordially by the hand; but though she thus condescended to be civil to one whom she had supposed to be an inexperienced girl, there was a calm self-possession and a dignified modesty in Emma's manner of returning her salutation, which at once checked her familiar audacity. She saw at a glance that it was no mere common-place young

lady; no mere good-natured girl with whom she had to deal, and instead of despising Miss Saville, her jealousy of her attractions was increased.

It cost her, therefore, some trouble to smile sweetly, and to exchange with her a few polite phrases about the weather, and the beauty of Cleve Court.

"All here is strange to you, no doubt," she said. "You must have last seen it when you were very young; and even in my remembrance Sir Charles has made so many tasteful alterations that the whole aspect of the place is improved. It required the taste and feeling of a true amateur of poetry and art to preserve the venerable character of an ancient English residence, and combine the mediæval with the Italian style. You have a real genius for construction, Sir Charles," she added, turning to the Baronet. "I can fancy that even your dreams must have been delightful when you were planning all those noble terraces and parterres."

"I believe they are rather pretty," replied the Baronet. "I had several plans laid before me

by the first men in London. I make it a rule always to employ the first men. You have to pay them exorbitantly it is true, but I consider it is our duty to remember that such people are dependent on their brains for their existence, and I never dispute their charges."

"Noble and like yourself," answered Lorry, in a half whisper, which she accompanied with a charming glance of admiration. "But there was one point on which the architect and I disagreed," returned the Baronet who had now got on a favourite subject. "If you will kindly come to the window I will point it out to you."

The lady immediately complied with this request which she had adroitly provoked, and for the fifth time since her arrival at Cleve, she was compelled to hear with smiling complacency, the horrible fact, that the lion rampant on the pillars at the top of the garden staircase, held up their left paw instead of their right one. Such are the petty miseries of prosperous men.

"What a shocking mistake in the sculptor," she replied.

"Sculptor! a mere bungler," said Sir Charles, "I took a good deal of trouble to search into the ancient documents of the family, to ascertain the exact point. The lion was the original crest of Sir Lionel Saville, who was killed in the second crusade; and as you know my family is of royal descent, I consider that no mistake should be made in these matters."

"You are indeed worthy of such a descent, dear Sir Charles," murmured Miss Dillion tenderly.

"For my part," said Lieutenant Blake, "I think a Turkey couchant with good gravy, is worth all the lions rampant at the Herald's College."

"I am perfectly aware of your tastes," said the Baronet with infinite solemnity, "but you at least, Miss Dillon, can sympathise with my love of antiquity."

"Yes, perfectly," she replied, with a gentle sigh; "it is worthy of you, my dear sir, and we must all be grateful to you as the head of our family, for maintaining, untarnished, the honour

of the Savilles. The right paw, I think you said?"

"No, my dear Miss Dillon, the left paw. Let me impress that on your mind, for it is a most remarkable fact; contrary even to the law of nature; it is the left paw which the animal extends, whilst all men, that is to say most men, make use of the right hand, an analogy which has no doubt induced the sculptor to persist in his mistake, which I now point out to you. But artists are mere workmen; vain conceited fellows in general, who obstinately refuse to profit by the criticism and advice of men of education."

"But your acknowledged learning and taste might have commanded respect," rejoined Miss Dillon.

The Baronet only shook his head in answer to this observation, and further discourse was then prevented by the arrival of numerous guests.

"Whilst all this was passing, Emma, seated on a distant sofa, had been unwillingly listening to Dillon's half whispered and sarcastic remarks on the assembled company.

"Many of the guests are worthy people no doubt," he said, "but not amusing; and I am afraid that neither my mother nor sister are likely to suit you much better than Ned Cranbourne or Sir Charles. But it was your own choice to come here; if it turns out badly, remember I am not to blame. But my interest in your welfare, my dear cousin," he added in a lower tone, "is only increased by your resolute self-will, and the difficulties in which I foresee it will involve you."

"I am not aware of anything I have to dread," answered the girl, looking him earnestly in the face. "I am here by my uncle's invitation, and he has received me kindly."

"The old fool," muttered Dillon, looking with a sarcastic smile on his lips, at the well-wigged, well dressed old beau, who, elated by Lorry's flattery, was receiving his guests with the most graceful and self-satisfied courtesy; smiling to show his teeth, with as much complacency as if they were actually his own.

"You don't appear to have much respect for

your relative," returned Emma with a quiet smile, in answer to Dillon's last words.

"I have much more for his estates, which in the course of nature, ought to descend to you, in a few years," was his reply. "But it appears that my sister has a design to appropriate the old Baronet to herself, and his estates into the bargain. But she had better take heed what she does, for I shall not sit by and see that game played with impunity."


"You take strange fancies," returned the girl, with a bright look of intelligence, but scarcely had she uttered the words, when Dillon who was gazing at her with undisguised admiration, saw with astonishment that she turned as pale as death.

He looked, as she did, towards the door, and then, as if too much annoyed by what he saw, to conceal his irritation, he sprang hastily from his seat, and folding his arms, stood with compressed lips, and gathered brows, struggling with contending feelings, as he saw his mother and sister receive, as an accustomed guest, the

man he most dreaded and detested, the village surgeon, Vaughan.

Dillon had known him intimately in former years, and Vaughan was acquainted with many particulars of his conduct and early history, which he desired to be for ever buried in oblivion. Yet this man, after a long absence, had returned recently to Winside, and though the lawyer was far from being superstitious, he had a dread lest fate had directed him thither, as a minister of retribution.

After the first effects of surprise had passed away, Dillon was too much a man of the world to betray any further emotion, and he very quickly sufficiently mastered his feelings, to resume his usual habit of watching all around him. He saw that Emma blushed, and then turned very pale, when she met the piercing glance of Vaughan. The expression of the surgeon's face was unusually severe. Once he approached the sofa on which she sat, but she looked down, as if unconscious of his proximity. A sense of her own dignity prevented her again



saluting him, after the manner in which he had last returned her courtesy.

Dillon looked from one to the other, smiling with secret satisfaction; delighted to perceive that Miss Saville had promptly followed his advice; and his vanity was flattered by such an unexpected evidence of his power over his ward. In excellent humour he then went up to Vaughan, and accosted him as an old acquaintance, and expressed pleasure at meeting him again.

The surgeon fixed his searching eyes upon Dillon's face, and said in low and measured tones, "I am not aware by whom I have the honour of being addressed."

"Your memory is short," replied Dillon, and becoming livid with rage, he turned abruptly away.

Emma heard the words uttered by these two men, and though she had not ventured to look at them, the tones of their voices had made her fully understand the hatred which existed between them. She knew them both sufficiently, to feel convinced that Dillon must deserve the

contempt he had provoked, but she had little time to meditate on the subject, dinner being announced almost immediately afterwards.

Mrs. Dillon as usual, took the head of the table, but Sir Charles arranged for his niece to sit next the only nobleman present.

He was a bachelor, and a sportsman, and was so deeply interested in recounting the feats of his own terriers to Miss Dillon, who sat opposite to him, that he scarcely addressed ten words to the pretty girl at his side.

But Emma's self-love was not wounded in the least, and her curiosity was much excited by Lorry's wild conversation, and the remarks with which she excited the Viscount's mirth in the highest degree, though treating him all the while in a manner which made it plain to others that she considered him a goose.

She talked of riding, she talked of racing and hunting; she bantered the Viscount about being an old bachelor, protested that she knew he detested women, and that he should never be asked to Cleve again as long as she remained.

"But Sir Charles invited me before you came," said the sportsman, somewhat embarrassed.

"He made a mistake," retorted the girl, laughing, "and you may be assured that unless you are married before the expiration of the year, you will be excluded from this house for ever."

"Your sentence is very harsh, Miss Dillon," said the Viscount, "if you mean to remain here yourself."

"It will be your own fault if you incur it," she replied. "We poor women have no way of helping ourselves to husbands, but a man is not to be pitied for celibacy."

"Unless he has been refused by Miss Dillon," whispered Lieutenant Blake, a young cavalry officer, with seven thousand a year, and a title in perspective.

He had brought Lorry down to dinner, having fallen desperately in love with her two days before for the capital manner in which he had seen her bring her restive ponies to order. But he

was a foolish youth, and as she had not yet ascertained the extent of his fortune and expectations, though she had shown no dislike to flirt with him in private, she did not think him worth much public notice, especially in the presence of Sir Charles Saville, to excite whose jealousy the Viscount was a more suitable object. She liked to engross the attention of every man in company, for the mere gratification of her vanity, for she would not have married even the Viscount had he asked her. She knew him to be a wealthy fool, but she knew also that he was proud and avaricious, and did not estimate his own value in the matrimonial market under fifty thousand pounds. Lorry set even a higher value on her charms than anything the Viscount could offer her, and determined to secure a splendid position by marriage, the only way by which a gentlewoman can make a fortune; she would have married a groom if he had settled a hundred thousand pounds upon her.

And this is the state to which our luxury, and our civilization, and our artificial wants,

and our misapplication of the public money, to support the extravagance of the upper classes, have brought us. Domestic ties and honest duties are forgotten in the world of fashion; the lust for show is ever increasing, and if it cannot be gratified by fair means, no principle impedes the acquirement of the money necessary to procure it; even matrimony is made a means to content the love of luxury, and the slaves of fashion are contented to sell themselves to the best bidder.

Mrs. Dillon, after having sold herself, had assisted to dissipate her husband's fortune, and to spend the income he derived from a public office, till his death left her with small means to fall back in the miserable position of a poor relative of haughty people. Without independence of character, or virtuous industry to make her superior to fortune, she had been striving for years to keep up false appearances, and Lorry, accustomed in early youth to luxury and extravagance, and afterwards initiated into the degrading expedients necessary in order to live

fashionably upon a scanty income, had grown up with no other object in view than that of escaping by marriage from the slavery of poverty. Her mother had been a beauty, and had not given up pretensions to conquest, so that mother and daughter, without making confidantes of each other, were equally resolved to marry Sir Charles Saville, and to become mistress of Cleve Court.

Though the Baronet delighted in Lorry's vivacity when exerted for his special amusement, he was greatly annoyed by her laughing during dinner, when he could not distinctly hear from the other end of the table the conversation which excited her mirth. It made him exceedingly jealous, and exceedingly cross, and after clearing his throat several times to call the gay girl to order, he gave up the attempt, and sitting bolt upright, and staring rigidly before him, looked as black as an Egyptian divinity hewn in marble.

When Lorry in the wild flow of her spirits suddenly caught a glimpse of his state of petri-

faction, though delighted at such a proof of her power, she felt that she must not go too far. Making a slight sign to her mother, that lady gave the signal for the ladies to retire.

Dillon, who understood the game his sister was playing, and whose interest it was to counteract it, made no attempt to divert the ill humour of the Baronet, but sat in gloomy abstraction, as if shocked by Lorry's levity.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Charles," he said at length, after drawing his chair close to the Baronet, "but you cannot wonder that I am hurt by seeing my sister flirting so carelessly, when she is all but engaged to a man to whom she has given undoubted encouragement."

"Engaged," exclaimed the Baronet, "you astonish me. "Who is the pretender to her hand, may I ask?"

"A wealthy merchant in London," answered Dillon; "he is ready to make handsome settlements, and Lorry likes money."

"Settlements!" echoed Sir Charles in so loud a tone, that the lawyer looked round anxiously

to assure himself that their conversation did not reach the ears of the rest of the party, who had gathered round the Viscount.

"I will tell you more another time," he said, "I want your advice, my dear sir. You are the head of the family; I place implicit reliance on your judgment, and I cannot act without your approbation. Nothing must be permitted inconsistent with your high sense of dignity, nothing which can cast a shadow upon the honour of the family. But if gay girls now-a-days can get money enough for their finery and their follies, they care for nothing else."

"Very wrong, Mr. Dillon, very wrong," said the Baronet, looking exceedingly perplexed. "I am glad to find that you at least remember that your grandmother was a Saville. But we will discuss these matters another time, for I must now follow my guests into the drawing room."

Whilst the old gentleman spoke, he had been sharply watching the Viscount, whom he now hastily accompanied to the ladies.

Dillon had done his cause no good; he had

only made the Baronet jealous of two men instead of one, and his vanity was so great, that he at once resolved to prove that the girl, whose teasing and flattery had given by excitement a new charm to his existence, should prefer him to either of his rivals.

Men like Dillon may be able to manage old women, but they are no match for a dashing girl when an old gentleman is in the case. Lorry had only sportively to scold the Baronet for his long delay, to give him a sweet smile, when she whispered to him that there was no one there whom she could endure to hear sing but himself, and she was higher in his favour than ever. He resolved to cross question her at the first convenient opportunity, about the rich merchant in the city, and to make her brother fully explain what he meant by his insinuations against her. But in the meantime, the battery of her eyes, and the graceful movements of her perfect form, joined to her insinuating flattery, sufficed to secure her victory for that evening at least.

Her spirits rising with the consciousness of

success, the whole company was amused by her brilliant sallies, but excepting Sir Charles Saville, very few persons were pleased. Though both graceful and witty, there was a want of feminine modesty in all she did, which the men secretly disapproved and the women openly condemned. But intoxicated by the flattery, which was freely given because almost demanded, she believed herself irresistible.

Vaughan saw all, and not in spirits to encounter Miss Dillon's raillery, he withdrew as much as possible from observation, pretending to turn over a volume of engravings, though he seized every moment when unobserved, to watch the deportment and countenance of Emma Saville, who, silent and unobtrusive, seemed to take little interest in what was passing around her.

Strange was it, he thought, that they alone of all that company should know, that the son and heir of their host, long banished as an outlaw from his country and the home of his fathers, and counted amongst the dead, was not only still alive, but then concealed in the

immediate neighbourhood of that mansion, his father had forbidden him to enter during his life-time; but to which, after the Baronet's death, he was next heir, under his grandfather's will, to the utter confusion of all those who speculated on the chances of appropriating Sir Charles' inheritance. Knowing this, and watching Miss Dillon's manœuvres, he smiled unconsciously, at the idea of her being finally entangled in her own meshes.

The fact of little Harry's removal to the Vicarage, left him no doubt of Captain Saville's relationship to the boy, and he had already begun to think that other motives besides those by which, in the fury of his surprise and jealousy he had believed Emma to be actuated, might have induced her to admit the outlawed cousin, into her house during the night. He looked at the girl's sweet innocent face, and placid figure, sitting in calm, simple, yet dignified reserve, like a personification of purity and modesty, amongst the frippery and vanity of the women, who surrounded her; he contrasted her manner with

the easy insolence, and the audacious familiarity and the unfeeling flippancy of Lorry Dillon, whose deceit had first made him suspicious of all her sex, and their proximity now sufficed to convince him of their utter dissimilarity. Virtue and high feeling, an unconsciousness of deserving or exciting remark, were as visible in Emma Saville, as insatiable vanity and restless ambition, were marked characteristics of Miss Dillon.

Vaughan would gladly have expressed to Miss Saville, whilst under the influence of such feelings, his regret for his jealous mistrust, but he felt he had no right to expect her pardon, without confessing his love, and his imagined cause for jealousy. In a crowded drawing-room, it was impossible to do so, nor did Emma give him any encouragement to address her. Though she did not fail to remark that he no longer regarded her with severity, she felt that a reconciliation must originate with him. And thus they parted; both pained by their misunderstanding, yet both undecided how to bring it to a happy termination.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Miss Saville became more intimate with the family circle assembled at Cleve, she found little to indemnify her for the peaceful seclusion of the village home, she had left. Mrs. Dillon was languid and silly, her daughter abrupt and impertinent, though she affected to treat her with a sort of protecting and compassionate affection, in order to please the old Baronet, who was the only person whose will she obeyed. She had determined to marry him, and therefore spared no pains to fascinate him. The most difficult part of her task was to make her own vanity subservient

to his; but though she sometimes failed in this, for she thoroughly despised his folly, she understood his character so well, that with all her faults, she contrived daily to advance in his favour. Yet still, she had not yet brought him to make her a distinct offer of his hand. But she was determined that he should speedily do so.

The arrival of Emma Saville at Cleve was the first serious obstacle she had hitherto encountered; for if he persevered in the intention he had expressed of placing his niece at the head of his establishment, a wife would be totally unnecessary to him.

To render Emma disagreeable to the old Baronet, and to get her out of the house as soon as possible was, therefore, Lorry's first object, and though Vaughan and Miss Saville had given no sign of recognition when they met, her quick eye had detected certain glances which convinced her that they were not indifferent to each other. On this foundation she determined to work.

Her brother's attention to Emma had also not

escaped her, but she was resolved to allow no union there, for Dillon united to Sir Charles's niece would be too strong an opponent of her own interests to leave her the slightest hope of success. Money! money! money and pleasure were her sole objects of pursuit, and these she was determined to attain.

She had never heard anything about principle, except in the dry religious school instructions, which she detested, and forgot as soon as the class was over; or at church, where she went every Sunday to show her beauty, without a thought of prayer, or an idea of listening to the sermon.


She was clever, yet she had learnt nothing but to dance, and to dress, and to play the piano a little, and sing sufficiently to draw the men around her at a party.—She was a lily of the field, neither born to toil, nor spin, nor to take heed for the morrow; and like a thousand others, she basked in the sunshine of prosperity, for the clouds had not yet come to shadow it. She had no sorrow, and heeded not the griefs of others.

With a sharp eye she watched Sir Charles during breakfast, when one morning soon after Emma's arrival he appeared to pay her particular attention, and when she heard him ask his ward with solemn politeness to accompany him afterwards to his library, where he wished to have a little private conversation with her, her jealous uneasiness almost amounted to indignation.

When Miss Dillon was left alone with her mother her face became as black as a thunder-cloud, and the old lady, who from her daughter's childhood had been terrified by her bursts of passion, would gladly have soothed her had she known what had excited her anger.

Lorry rose impetuously from her chair, walked to the window, looked out at the tranquil landscape without seeing it, and then turning suddenly to her mother, exclaimed:

"And there you sit, ma'am, as quietly and placidly as if there was nothing the matter. It is enough to make one mad! I believe you would not be disturbed if a cannon was fired through the window."



"Really, my dear Lorry, I don't understand your agitation," said Mrs. Dillon, quietly taking up the netting at which she had worked for the last twelve months.

"No, ma'am, I suppose you don't," replied the insolent girl, her eyes flashing like those of a young tigress. "I suppose we must all be beggared, turned out of this house, never more to enter it, before you would understand that our interests were in the slightest danger."

"My dear child, do be calm," said the helpless lady, laying her hand gently on her daughter's arm. "I am sure you have no cause of uneasiness. Sir Charles, I am certain, is all kindness and generosity, and in fact, Lorry, I may say I feel quite secure on that point."

"On what point?" asked Lorry, with a fierce and scornful sneer on her handsome face, which destroyed all her pretensions to beauty.

"On that point—you understand me—the point we were speaking of," rejoined Mrs. Dillon, softly; "the being turned out of Cleve, and all that sort of thing. We are in very good

quarters. There being a housekeeper, I have no trouble at all, and really the dinners are tolerable, though not so good as when my dear Dillon was president of the B. commission. I am quite satisfied here."

"I have no doubt you are," returned the daughter, with undisguised contempt; "but I repeat, you are on the point of losing all these good things, and surely if any thing can inspire you with a little common sense, such a danger must."

"You are quite mistaken my dear," said Mrs. Dillon with a soft smile. "I never felt more secure of enjoying them for life."

"How do you mean?" demanded Lorry eagerly, and the joyful thought flashed across her mind, that the Baronet had proposed for her to her mother.

"I mean more than I can say," was the reply of the blushing matron, "but Sir Charles is indeed, the noblest of men. This very morning I was quite overwhelmed by his politeness. When I talked of going, he kindly pressed my

hand, begged me to prolong my stay at Cleve, indefinitely, in fact he said, I can hardly repeat it—”

“Go on,” cried Lorry imperiously.

“Well then, to you, my child I will be candid, though I confess, it is more than I dared to hope,” rejoined the widow; “he said, I did the honours of his house so admirably, that his happiness depended on my remaining; in fact, that he hoped a means might be found, to retain me for ever in his house. In short, he was on the point of making me an offer of marriage, when the footman came in with the tea urn. It was dreadful at such a moment. We were sadly confused, I turned to play with the matches on the chimney-piece, and Sir Charles cleared his throat, and walked to the window. Provoking, very, when a man had almost taken courage to pop the question, to have him interrupted by a booby with hot water.”

“And you really believe that Sir Charles Saville intended to make you an offer of marriage?” demanded Miss Dillon, a wild expres-

sion of mirth, replacing the former anger in her flashing eyes.

"Yes, my dear, to be sure I do; who else would make so suitable a wife for him?" replied her mother, looking at her with calm satisfaction.

Lorry burst into a loud laugh.

"Well, that is too good!" she cried, and she continued to laugh, till even Mrs. Dillon's placid humour was moved, for to a lady of sixty-five, an offer is a very delicate subject.

"Really, Lorry, your conduct is very extraordinary," said her mother at last. "I cannot see what there is laughable in the matter. It would be a very fine thing for you, if I became Lady Saville, and mistress of Cleve Court."

"I dare say it would, ma'am," replied Lorry with affected gravity, and though she was tempted to add, that it would be still better to be mistress of it herself, she repressed the words, as well as her laughter, for she thought it best to leave her mother in her happy ignorance.

With all Miss Dillon's impetuosity, she was

very cunning, where her interest was concerned, and moreover having no doubt, that what the Baronet had said to her mother, applied entirely to herself, she was again in good humour, and ready to enjoy the joke of the old lady's delusion to the utmost. Filial respect is not a fashionable feeling.

But still, though Mrs. Dillon's disclosures gave Lorry renewed hopes of success, when Emma's interview with Sir Charles was prolonged beyond a quarter of an hour, she got very impatient to put an end to it. Nor was her brother less so, when he understood how the Baronet was engaged.

"The girl is charming in her way," said Dillon, with a sneer, "and I have little doubt, the old beau enjoys a *tête-à-tête* with her vastly, but you need not be jealous, Lorry, you know she is his own niece."

"Jealousy!" echoed Mrs. Dillon, with a look of astonishment at her son.

"Mamma is far more likely to be jealous than I am," cried the girl, with a sarcastic glance at

her brother, which he instantly understood, "you have no idea, what fine compliments the Baronet has been paying her."

"Ah, that would be a magnificent alliance for you, ma'am," said the lawyer coolly, "twenty thousand a year is no joke for man, or woman; but don't flatter yourself too much, there are many cards in the pack to be played, besides the Queen of Hearts. But it won't do to let the Baronet be closeted with Miss Saville much longer, or he may decide upon remaining single for the remainder of his life and making her his heiress, to the disappointment of certain other relatives and friends. But here comes Ned Cranbourne! just the fellow we want," exclaimed the lawyer, as the worthy individual, he named, walked into the room. "Well, my good fellow," he continued addressing Ned, "what have you been about, this morning? inventing some new scandal, or setting a fresh lie afloat?"

Cranbourne laid his finger on his nose, looked wonderfully knowing with his unequal eyes, and after saluting the ladies, took his seat at the

breakfast table, and began to eat with amazing rapidity. Nobody spoke, for Dillon knew there was nothing to be done with him till his hunger was appeased.

"Where is Sir Charles?" demanded the little man, after he had swallowed three cups of coffee, two eggs, and a pyramid of buttered toast, "I want to see him most particularly."

"You will find him in the library," responded Dillon. "Has anything important happened?"

"No, no, nothing particular, only in the village, a story has got afloat about an apparition. A most extraordinary story," said Ned, "I should not like him to hear it from any one but myself."

Dillon and Lorry both laughed aloud.

Cranbourne looked up at them in the midst of their mirth, with a strange expression of countenance.

"Well, laugh," he said, "I know you are very fond of laughing. I have often experienced that you are very fond of laughing indeed; but perhaps you might not consider this to be a

just cause for risibility, if you understood it better."

"A story of an apparition not laughable," cried Lorry, "surely, Mr. Cranbourne, you don't believe in ghosts!"

"Not in all ghosts certainly," returned the little man, "but this whole affair is so wonderful and people in the village give such various accounts of it, that I don't know what to think."

"If you want to see the Baronet, you had better go to him at once, or he will be gone," said Dillon, coolly taking up a newspaper, whilst Ned helped himself to a plate full of ham. Miss Dillon, who was getting very impatient, arose and walked to the window.

"Gone! where is he going?" cried Ned, "he never goes out before noon."

"You had better ask him yourself," said Lorry impatiently, "he only told us that he would be twenty minutes in the library, and it is now nearly half an hour since he went away."

"God bless me! thank you, thank you, I have no time to lose," cried Cranbourne, and leaving

his unfinished breakfast he rushed off in quest of the Baronet.

Both the lawyer and his sister laughed at the success of their project, and in spite of their mother's remonstrances, had the breakfast removed as quickly as possible, that Cranbourne might find nothing on his return.

Emma in the meantime, had been conducted with great solemnity by her uncle to the library, where he placed a chair for her, and seated himself before he addressed her.

Miss Saville was agitated, though not afraid. The whole scene, so formal and unnatural, was far different from the frank simplicity with which her father had always treated her, but she knew enough of her uncle's character to be prepared for his peculiarities, and she thought more of the matter than the manner of his discourse. When he began to speak, his accents were soft and slow, and he frequently during his discourse cast a glance of admiration at his well shaped, but withered hand, which rested gracefully on the arm of his chair.

“Miss Saville,” he began, “you are well aware, I presume, that I am the head of your family—the family of Saville, one of those honorable families of England, which though they might lay claim to peerages in abeyance, prefer their ancient name to any title; a family, in fact, worthy of a long list of royal ancestors, in fact, royal origin, the Savilles being descended lineally from Sir Lionel Saville, who married the widow of one of the Plantagenets. But enough of that, we are honorable, and no man disputes it; I am proud of my birth, I confess it, but your father, you are aware, set no value on his descent, and less on mine. Even after I became head of the family, he treated me with positive contempt. He married without my consent; I have reason to believe that he encouraged the son, whom death has taken from me, in very foolish courses, and so, in fact, we quarrelled; but I am lenient towards the weakness of others. For the first time in his life, Major Saville showed a proper sense of our relationship, by appointing me your guardian, and from what I have seen of you, I

trust the discharge of that duty will be as agreeable to you as to myself, hem!"

Sir Charles here paused. Not for want of breath, but from an exhaustion of ideas, which made him incapable for the moment of finding anything more to say.

Emma did not attempt to assist him; she only bowed, and said something about duty, and gratitude, and satisfaction, in a very low tone.

"Oh, yes, the will!" cried the Baronet, suddenly, after duly contemplating his nails. "I forgot that I wished to speak to you about Major Saville's will. He leaves the whole of the property to you; but let me ask you a question, a painful question, I admit, and believe me I have not the slightest wish to hurt your feelings, but the question is necessary; had he any property to leave?"

"My father was not rich, certainly," replied Emma, blushing deeply. "My mother's fortune had been lost with part of his own by the failure of an Indian bank, but I have always understood

that he had placed two thousand pounds in the English funds, and one thousand pounds in America."

"That is very vague information," replied the Baronet. "Very vague indeed."

"Mr. Dillon can, no doubt, explain it more exactly," returned the girl, "for he had the management of all my father's affairs."

"Yes, my dear young lady," returned Sir Charles, with great solemnity, "the will mentions the sums of money you speak of, but Mr. Dillon tells me that your father laboured under an entire delusion on that score, for that all the money he had ever possessed in such funds had been drawn out, and lost in speculations, since Major Saville's return to England, leaving the few hundreds in the banker's hands your sole inheritance; conduct most unworthy of a parent and a gentleman. But that all comes of his radical principles and self-conceit."

"May I beg you, sir, to spare my father's memory," said Emma, with gentle firmness, though tears filled her eyes. "I assure you I

am ignorant of his ever having engaged in speculations, of which he always expressed the greatest abhorrence. His expences were regulated by wise economy, and whatever Mr. Dillon may now assert, I can assure you he remitted my father the interest due on three thousand pounds only a month before his death."

"Ah, yes; he tells me that, finding Major Saville was under some delusion as to the amount of his property," returned the Baronet, "and knowing he was dying, he sent him money in this way, in order to keep up the credit of the family. In fact, Miss Saville, I will confess to you, when I understood the case, I sent it myself through Dillon's hands."

"You sent my father money, Sir Charles?" exclaimed Emma with amazement.

"Yes, I did," said the Baronet. "When I heard that Major Saville was in real distress, I was sorry for him, though he had never treated me with proper respect, and for the reputation of my family, I could not allow my only brother to be reduced to beggary "

Emma's heart beat wildly; though there was condescension, and perhaps some touch of natural feeling in Sir Charles's manner, she felt with deep mortification that the disclosure was an insult to the dead, for the gratification of his own pride, and believing the whole story to be a fabrication of Dillon's, she would, with her usual impetuosity, at once have said so, had not the words she heard uttered on the night of her father's death suddenly recurred to her mind, and convinced her of the necessity of prudence and of suppressing her indignation.

She said, therefore, with as much tranquillity as she could assume, "Mr. Dillon has deceived you, sir."

"Deceived me, my dear young lady," replied the Baronet pompously, "that would not be easy for any man to do. You are scarcely aware of my character, Miss Saville, I perceive. In fact, a young person—an inexperienced person, cannot be expected fully to appreciate—hem—it was of Mr. Dillon I think you spoke. You brought a serious charge against him, but that charge re-

flected a discredit upon me, of no trifling nature."

"I had no such intention, believe me," said Emma modestly. "I fear you must have misunderstood me."

"I am not apt to misunderstand a person who speaks clearly," retorted Sir Charles, with great dignity. "I understood you perfectly; you said Mr. Dillon has deceived me. Now, that is a very serious charge; first, as to that gentleman, and secondly, as to my weakness in being deceived. Now, I think I may say, without any vanity, that there is no man living less liable to be deceived than myself; my experience of life has been great, my knowledge of mankind has been improved by study; the vast property I inherited from my ancestors, has given me habits of business, which, allow me to say, Miss Saville, your father did not possess. People are apt to suppose that we men of fortune, who are not in parliament, have nothing to do; but it is a great mistake, a very great mistake. I am, at times, perfectly overwhelmed with business, and really,

I hope, I may not have much to do, in consequence of your father's will."

"I should be very sorry to be the cause of annoyance to you, in any way," said Emma, wondering what all this was to lead to.

"Exactly so, my dear young lady," answered the Baronet, "I wish to avoid all troublesome investigations or disputes. My fortune is large, as you are aware, and though your father may have left you nothing, I wish you to understand, that as long as you act in obedience to my wishes, this house is your home. I meant to wait a month before I decided, but as I have informed you of the real state of your finances, I think it right to tell you, I shall continue to allow you a hundred a year, pocket money, till you give me any just cause for displeasure; and at the same time, you must consider Cleve Court your home as long as this arrangement is agreeable to us both."

"I know not how to thank you, sir," said Emma timidly; and in spite of the old man's pride and folly, she felt grateful for his generous

protection. She did not stop to consider the mixed motives of her uncle's conduct, but thanked him with sincere gratitude, for kindness she had by no means expected. He was pleased by the warmth of her manner.

Sincerity has a charm, to which all the deceitful professions of adroit flatterers can never attain; and Sir Charles unconsciously felt this, as he listened to his niece's simple but heartfelt thanks, and he was for the moment more satisfied with himself, and all the rest of the world, than he had ever been whilst listening to Lorry's flattery. The better part of his character had been called into activity, and with that activity came self-content.

He liked Emma all the better for this, though quite unconscious how such a conclusion had been brought about.

"From what I have seen of you," he finally said, "I consider you a very sensible girl, a very properly conducted young woman; and allow me to say I should be very sorry, if any prejudice against my cousin Dillon remained on your mind. His sister is a very charming person, a very

charming person indeed; Mr. Dillon is a gentleman, and they are our near relatives, whom you will often meet in this house. I wish perfect harmony to exist under my roof. There have, unfortunately, been too many misunderstandings in our family already, and it is my particular desire, Miss Saville, that you lay aside all suspicions of Mr. Dillon, as I place entire confidence in him. I trust him with the entire management of my vast property, my railway shares, my scrip, in fact my whole property. He is not a man to be doubted nor spoken lightly of. But I am sure you are sorry, very properly sorry, for your hasty observation, so I will now say no more on the subject."

Emma bowed in silence, for she felt that all argument would be vain with a man like her uncle, who considered himself incapable of error, until it could be supported by indisputable evidence of Dillon's villany.

Nevertheless, well aware of her father's exact manner of keeping his accounts, and of his well regulated economy, she had not the slightest

doubt that she was justly entitled to the full amount of the property he had specified in his will. Nor was she of a character to allow such an affair to rest quietly, without further investigation, but it required time to consider the plan she must pursue; and the Baronet, who had no suspicion of her real character, was perfectly enchanted by the submissive silence with which she yielded to his decision. He had gained a new subject in his little kingdom, whose beauty and graces of manner made it quite delightful to command.

With proud satisfaction, and quite sure of Emma's approbation, Sir Charles proposed to show her all the recent improvements he had made in his house and grounds, but before they could leave the library, this arrangement was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Ned Cranbourne.

The Baronet regarded him from head to foot with a most petrifying stare, for which the little man cared not a straw. He was brim full of news, and in that state, like a man brim full of

wine, he was insensible to outward impressions.

"I gave orders not to be disturbed," said the Baronet, in his most freezing tone.

"Did you?" rejoined Ned carelessly. "I am exceedingly sorry, upon my word, but Dillon told me to come to the library."

"I think, sir, you must be mistaken," was the baronet's reply. "Mr. Dillon is not apt to interfere with my arrangements. But luckily my business is concluded, and I should be glad to know if you have any object for thus intruding on my privacy."

The last words were uttered by Sir Charles in a much blander tone than that in which he had commenced speaking, for he suspected, from the expression of Cranbourne's face, that he had some extraordinary history to relate, and as his idle life was very monotonous, he had acquired the habit of relying on Ned's anecdotes for his chief source of amusement.

Poor Ned was one of the numerous slaves of money. Keen witted enough, but lazy and fond

of enjoyment, he was contented to procure it by cringing on a rich man, or a great man, as the baronet considered himself; and was, in fact, considered by many, for greatness is indeed made up of little things, especially if those little things be cemented by gold.

Habit had made the duties by which this poor younger son of a country gentleman obtained the enjoyment of Sir Charles Saville's wealth, no longer irksome to him. He had a true delight in communicating any extraordinary piece of news, or exciting the curiosity of his patron.

Twice he allowed him to repeat his enquiry as to his object in coming that day to the library before he intimated distinctly, that he had something of great importance to communicate, but that, in the young lady's presence, it would, perhaps, not be prudent to disclose it.

"This young lady is my niece, and enjoys my highest confidence," said the baronet, with great pomposity, "and I flatter myself, Mr. Cranbourne, that you can have no disclosures to

make to me which are unfit for a lady to listen to."

"Oh, no; no danger of that; not the slightest impropriety, upon my word," answered Ned laughing. "But I would rather speak to you alone. I have my reasons, very particular reasons, I assure you."

Emma at once arose, and said with a smile, that she would retire, and leave Mr. Cranbourne at liberty to speak openly.

"My dear young lady, you are my guest, not Mr. Cranbourne's," said Sir Charles, delighted in every way to show his power. "You will favor me by remaining here. Mr. Cranbourne's narratives are not usually so important as to have a claim to my private ear; amusing, very amusing at times, I admit, but not matters of business. Proceed, I beg," he added, turning to Ned, when they were all seated. "What new slander is in circulation about me in the neighbourhood?"

"I have heard nothing but your praises, Sir Charles," answered the little man. "The people

look upon you as a sort of guardian angel since you sent down ten pounds to buy the old women at Winside flannel petticoats last winter."

"Is that all you have to tell me?" asked the baronet, well pleased with this coarse flattery.

"Oh, no," said Ned, "that is a matter of course. But I have a very uncommon occurrence to relate, a thing of which the whole village is talking."

"Speak to the point!" cried Sir Charles impatiently, whilst Emma listened with a vague, uneasy feeling of anxiety.

"It is somewhat difficult to do that," answered Ned, "for I have heard so many different versions of the same story, so many various accounts of the same event."

"And what is that event? Tell us that at once, and we can judge of the value of the different accounts afterwards," cried Sir Charles impatiently.

"You must excuse my hesitation in disclosing this affair," answered Ned, "for I am aware you place no faith in such stories. The thing which

agitates the inhabitants of Winside at present is an apparition."

"An apparition!" exclaimed Sir Charles with unusual asperity; "do you mean to insult me, Mr. Cranbourne?"

"No, Sir Charles, I am only stating a fact," returned the imperturbable newsmonger. "There are many of the villagers who assert they have seen a ghost."

"How can you expect me to believe such folly," demanded the baronet, now really angry, though endeavouring, out of politeness to Miss Saville, to govern his wrath. "It is a positive insult to my understanding to repeat such nonsense."

"That is what I said when I heard it first," replied Ned; "but I was compelled to believe the truth of the story when I saw the figure myself, springing down the Red Cliff, in front of Nanny Ainsley's cottage."

"Don't talk to me of that audacious woman!" cried Sir Charles. "She is capable of every vile imposition if she has any ends to answer."

"She pretends to know nothing about it," rejoined Ned, "and though I saw a figure in a shepherd's plaid come out of her own door, she protested to me that no man had been in her cottage that morning. The sexton saw the same figure sitting behind a grave stone last night, and then it vanished away like mist; and Jim, the barber's apprentice, declares that he saw it more than a fortnight ago, disappear, as if by magic, at the back of Miss Saville's house."

"And whose spirit is it which excites such useless terror?" demanded the baronet pompously.

"I have not heard that even surmised," replied Cranbourne, "but I will tell you my private opinion, as you are a magistrate and a man in authority. I believe the whole thing to be a trick of the smugglers. Nanny's house has long been in bad repute, and if the ghost wears a plaid, as the sexton and others assert, it must be identical with the figure I saw come thence, and her positive denial of any one having been in

her cottage, at once convinced me that she was concerned in carrying on some deception."

"Her house must be searched," said Sir Charles. "The matter shall be properly investigated. I cannot allow my deluded tenants to be cheated by a nest of sharpers. I will send down at once to the revenue officers, and have the smugglers arrested."

"The idea is excellent!" responded Ned, who, though he thought this was going too fast, durst not strengthen the baronet's resolve by opposition. "Before to-morrow," he added, "I will endeavour to obtain information sufficient to justify such a step, for I feel convinced that with your usual penetration you have devised the right course to be pursued; for the whole mystery of the apparition will be satisfactorily solved, no doubt, by its being discovered to be a smuggler's trick."

But Emma thought far otherwise, as she listened in silence to this conversation, and she feared lest Captain Saville's incautious behaviour might ultimately occasion his discovery and arrest.

Though she loved another, she took a strong interest in his fate, for in spite of all his extravagance and imprudence, he had good qualities, powers of fascination, which, through life had won him devoted friends, and her father had been one of these. She now knew him also to be her cousin who, in boyhood and youth, had been spoilt by the foolish indulgence of his parents, and then harshly dealt with by those whose duty it was to have corrected his early faults, and reclaimed him from the vices of manhood; and her knowledge of their consanguinity, and the affection she bore his child increased her commiseration for his sufferings. Though aware that his misfortunes had been entailed on him by his own passions, she pitied his forlorn and degraded position, when she saw him an exile in his native land under the ban of the law, and shut out, not only from the society in which he had once moved, but from his paternal home.

As she sat unobserved in the shadow, deeply sunk in a large arm chair, she looked, with half bewildered terror, on the babbling, prosperous

old man, who, amidst all the appliances of luxury, was unconsciously devising the ruin of his own misguided, but lamented son; and she thought with silent sorrow and indignation of the poor, forlorn outcast, whose worn and eager countenance, imploring her compassion and her love, had haunted her, even like an apparition, as some believed it to be. Ever since the night when she had beheld him gazing wistfully at his sleeping boy, she had determined to serve him whenever an opportunity occurred for doing so, even at the risk of her own happiness.

When she remembered Vaughan's jealousy, she recoiled from the danger of losing his affection for ever by the conduct she considered it her duty to pursue; but even that apprehension did not shake her resolution to rescue her cousin, if possible, from danger. All the energy of her honest and noble nature once aroused, she forgot the trials of her own destiny in her anxiety to avert the afflictions which wealth, and flattery, and self delusion had brought down upon her uncle's house, and seemed likely to entail on it.

She had seen enough to know that profound intrigues were weaving their meshes around the childless old man, as they believed Sir Charles Saville to be, and even before he had concluded his colloquy with Ned Cranbourne, she had resolved, as if inspired by some strong power beyond her own control, to burst through the web, and effect a reconciliation between the father and son. Not without cause had her father warned her, on his death-bed, against the imprudent rashness of her nature.

But though a fault, it was nobly directed, and her high resolve exalted even her beauty when she arose from her chair, and advancing from the deep shadow, went up to Cranbourne and her uncle.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Charles, if I intrude on your conference with Mr. Cranbourne," she said, "but I believe that I can so fully elucidate the mysterious circumstances he has related to you, that all suspicion of evil will be dispelled, and your idea of making use of force at once laid aside."

“Miss Saville, I am astonished!” exclaimed the Baronet, looking at his niece with amazement, and seeing her so changed without having even a consciousness of the mental power which animated her, he scarcely knew whether to consider her deranged, or to be angry at the familiarity of her manner of addressing him. “It would be highly indecorous for my niece, after she resides under my roof, to acknowledge any acquaintance with vagabonds, whatever her previous modes of life may have been.”

Emma paid no attention to this sneer; she had already learnt that she must not contradict her uncle. She endeavoured to subdue her emotion, to extinguish the fire of her eye, and to speak in a soft voice when she replied, that she hoped Sir Charles would allow her to give him some explanations, which might be satisfactory to him and Mr. Cranbourne.

“Speak calmly then, my dear young lady, and sit down again, I beg of you,” said the Baronet, pointing to a chair. “I hesitate not to

say that few men are so open to just conviction as myself."

"You are, indeed, the most candid and clear sighted of men," rejoined Cranbourne, with a soft smile, "and I cannot but admire your impartiality and sagacity in listening to Miss Saville's disclosures, which I admit I am impatient to hear."

"It appears to me very singular, to say the least of it," returned Sir Charles, "that a young lady in my niece's position in life, should know anything about a gang of illicit dealers."

"It is exactly because no illicit dealers are concerned with the affair, that I know anything about it," answered Emma.

Cranbourne moved uneasily on his chair; he even gave Miss Saville a look, which was meant to warn her to be more cautious in her expressions; but relying on the power of truth, she heeded neither his signs, nor the knitting of her uncle's brow, and thus proceeded:

"Nanny Ainsley was my father's foster sister."

"And an audacious, intriguing hussy as ever

existed," retorted Sir Charles, entirely forgetting his usual solemn politeness in the indignation this name excited.

"My father esteemed her intellect, and believed her devoted to our family," returned Emma gently.

"I need not now be informed, Miss Saville, that your father was a man most open to be deceived by hypocrites," said the Baronet. "I am not. But proceed, if you please; I am resolved to hear all you have to say, however improper and disagreeable it may be."

And Sir Charles assumed the countenance of a martyr.

Ned Cranbourne moved with restless anxiety on his chair, as he gazed alternately at Emma and her uncle, but the girl appeared perfectly calm. No interest could have induced her to cringe before the stubborn folly and petrified will of the proud rich man, like the poor sycophant who cherished his patron's faults by his selfish adulation, just as whole classes are spoilt by the subserviency of inferiors.

"My father was not singular in his respect for this poor woman," she mildly replied. "I have heard others speak highly of her honesty."

"Very likely," rejoined the Baronet impatiently; "but pray what has that to do with the story we have heard?"

"Much," replied Emma. "I wish not only to prove that Nanny is incapable of harbouring smugglers, but that she does not do so. You know, Sir Charles, that my father, when in India, adopted the child of an officer, to whom he was much attached."

"I have heard of this piece of folly."

"That officer was believed to have perished in a skirmish in the hills, and I was the only protector of his boy after my father's death."

"A very suitable office, no doubt, for a young lady," said the Baronet. "I have heard you were a very extraordinary person, Miss Saville, but I confess I did not believe that you had reached such a point of eccentricity."

"The most extraordinary part of my narrative remains to tell," continued the girl quietly.

"The father of my ward has survived his wounds, and since my residence in Winside he has returned to claim his son."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Ned Cranbourne, half springing from his seat as a sudden light burst upon his inquisitive mind; then suddenly recollecting the necessity for prudence, he sunk back in his chair, and covering his eyes with his hand, listened with secret impatience to the conclusion of Emma's narrative.

"I cannot see what all this has to do with your account of an apparition, Mr. Cranbourne, can you?" asked the Baronet, turning haughtily to his sycophant, as if he considered that Miss Saville had forfeited all claim to his attention.

"Perhaps we may yet learn more," said Ned, who was so overwhelmed by the importance of the discovery which he was half convinced that he had made, that he could not instantly collect his faculties sufficiently to make a longer reply, or to administer the flattery which was expected.

"There are circumstances," resumed Miss Saville, "which have made the father of my little ward desirous to conceal his return to England."

"I have no doubt of it," responded Ned Cranbourne, nodding his head, and entirely forgetting the presence of his host in the eagerness of his curiosity, and his pride at understanding more of Emma's story than she thought proper to disclose.

"Unwilling to excite attention by lodging in the village," she continued, "he has taken up his abode at Nanny Ainsley's. Once, at a late hour, he has visited his child at my house. He never stirs abroad, except in the dusk of the evening, and then completely disguised, and I have little doubt that his unknown figure has excited the superstition of the villagers, and given rise to this story of an apparition."

"And is this all you have to say to disprove the existence of a smugglers' gang?" inquired Sir Charles, when his niece ceased speaking. "You admit that this officer, whose name you

have not thought proper to inform us of, has reasons for concealment. What are those reasons?"

"I am not at liberty to disclose them," said Emma simply.

"Allow me to tell you, Miss Saville," answered the Baronet, "that I consider it most highly indelicate for any woman, much more a young woman, to be the confidante of a vagabond. Had I been aware that you had committed yourself in so improper a manner, as to be accessory—to be the abettor—to be the concealer—what shall I say—to be the associate of a fellow who fears to show his face in open day in his own country, I should have declined the task of being your guardian. A fellow who lodges at Nanny Ainsley's must be unfit to hold her Majesty's commission—a fellow who can only skulk about in the night time ought to have his epaulettes pulled off his shoulders. How do I know that he is not the leader of a band of smugglers, or housebreakers, or conspirators, who may endanger the peace of the country!"

"I assure you, sir, he is a gentleman for whom my father had much regard," said Emma, with quiet firmness.

"Your father!" exclaimed sir Charles, unable longer to suppress his anger; then suddenly checking himself, he added, in a subdued tone, "I beg your pardon, Miss Saville. I have given way to an undue expression of passion in your presence, but I am not accustomed to hear such strange opinions, such very bold assertions, from a young lady of your age. You must learn more respect to the judgment of men so much more experienced than yourself, of men of position, of authority—ahem!"

"Of wisdom and knowledge, like Sir Charles Saville," said Ned Cranbourne. "A man, Miss Saville, so versed in affairs that no one can doubt his penetration for an instant."

"You hear, Madam; you hear the opinion of Mr. Cranbourne," said the Baronet, mollified by this well timed compliment. "I am not to be deceived; and being convinced that the hovel at Red Cliff is the rendezvous of smugglers, I

shall not be diverted from my purpose of routing out the gang by any sentimental stories. I have only to add that I hope, Miss Saville, whilst under my roof, you will cease to maintain an intercourse with persons of doubtful character, even though they may have been your father's friends."

"Do you good people intend to pore over wills and settlements for the remainder of your precious lives?" demanded the gay voice of Lorry Dillon, who, all smiles, and bright as the sunshine, at this moment approached the open window, and peeped in, with a merry laugh, which showed her beautiful teeth, and instantly dispelled the ill-humour of Sir Charles.

"Pray come in, my dear Miss Dillon," he said approaching her, as Louis XIV. might have approached La Valière. "We have long concluded all matters of business, and should have before now rejoined you, but for a foolish story of Mr. Cranbourne's, which has led us into a somewhat unpleasant discussion, but your vivacity will dispel all gloom, and put an end to a silly debate."

"I am sure that epithet cannot apply to any conversation in which you have been engaged," replied Lorry, who, after her long impatience, was delighted to find that her cousin did not appear to have made much way in the Baronet's good graces. "Do tell me all about it."

"Some people are more fond of explanations than I am," answered the old man, darting a glance of displeasure at Emma. "I have no wish to renew the subject; but I am not so weak as to be diverted from a just decision by a few idle words."

"Oh, I know you are firmness itself," cried Lorry eagerly. "Firm in benevolence, firm in friendship, firm in—"

"Firm in what other virtue, my dear Miss Dillon?" enquired the Baronet tenderly returning the sweet glance which Lorry cast at him, as she hesitated to complete the sentence."

"I leave you to guess," she said, with affected modesty.

"Or, to prove it," he softly replied.

But Ned Cranbourne having heard what

passed, judged it high time to interfere. He jumped up, therefore, exclaiming:

"God bless me, Sir Charles, I quite forgot to tell you that the mason will be here this morning whom I have engaged to alter the lion's paw on the terrace. I really think I hear him hammering there at this moment."

"Very strange of you, Mr. Cranbourne, to omit giving me such a very important piece of information," said Sir Charles. "I find there is no one I can rely upon, and I must attend to everything myself. Miss Dillon, do me the honour of taking my arm. We will go ourselves and direct this fellow, or the whole thing will certainly be again mismanaged."

Then glancing at Emma, who was standing in deep thought, which he mistook for contrition, his heart relented, for he was not an ill-natured man, and he said blandly, "Miss Saville, no doubt you will like to accompany us. The gardens are well worth seeing?"

Emma, who had never in her life known what it was to be offended, readily accepted this over-

ture of reconciliation, and with a smile, which somewhat revived her uncle's first favourable impression, she accepted his invitation.

Sir Charles and Lorry had stepped out into the lawn before she reached the window, and unperceived by them, Ned Cranbourne twitched her gown as she passed him. She looked round at him with amazement, and she met at least one of his eyes directed upon her, with a most knowing and penetrating look. She was half inclined to reprove what she considered his impertinence, and he probably read her purpose on her countenance, for he said quickly in a whisper, which she only could hear, "you have made a mistake, Miss Saville. But take care what you are about, you are playing a dangerous game."

"How do you know?" demanded the girl in the same tone.

"Ask, rather, *what* do I know," rejoined Ned with a triumphant glance; "or *what* do I *not* know?"

"You terrify me," was all which Emma could reply, before Sir Charles turned round to call his

dog, and stood still out of politeness, for Miss Saville to join him.

This at once put an end to all further discourse between her and Cranbourne, and with a heart full of anxiety as to the extent of his knowledge, and the use or abuse which he might make of it, she accompanied Sir Charles and Miss Dillon to the lion staircase, in front of the house.



CHAPTER VII.

It will be useless to repeat all the foolish things which were said and done by the old Baronet, and the fair object of his admiration; and all the coquetry with which Lorry tormented and enchanted him, during the inspection of the mason's work upon the terrace of Cleve Court.

Perhaps there is no spectacle more ridiculous than an old coxcomb in love, or rather in that bewildered state of excited vanity, which, occasioned by the flattery of a pretty woman, he believes to be love. It is no doubt, happiness for a time, a delusive mirage of the days that are

gone, when not ruffled by jealousy; but wicked Lorry, who knew that nothing was so likely to establish her power, and bring her old lover to a prompt declaration, as this tormenting passion, was fully resolved to apply it as a stimulant, whenever an opportunity offered.

With Ned Cranbourne it was impossible to flirt; but to her great delight, after they had been about a quarter of an hour on the terrace, she saw Mr. Vaughan approaching them from the house.

He had been sent for to attend one of Sir Charles Saville's guests, who had been suddenly taken ill in the night.

Lorry watched keenly to see what passed between him and Emma. A distant bow was their only salutation, but their change of colour, which no power of self control could prevent, convinced her that they were better acquainted than they chose to acknowledge.

"What a charming person you are, to visit us so early," cried Miss Dillon, addressing the surgeon, with most winning glances; "I have been

quite counting the minutes for your arrival, for I want you, who are so admirable a botanist, to tell me the name of a dear little plant in the green-house, which nobody else seems to know anything about."

"I shall be delighted to be made useful," answered Vaughan with a grave bow.

"And agreeable at the same time, I hope," returned Lorry in a half whisper, which, as she intended, reached the ears of Sir Charles.

"You won't desert us till this work is completed, I hope, Miss Dillon," said the Baronet, with amazement and displeasure.

"Oh, I am tired of old stones, for this morning," she replied with a pretty smile, which made her words a jest. "Mr. Vaughan and I have a hundred things to say to each other; you have Miss Saville to amuse you, Sir Charles, and positively you cannot want us both."

"This is a point on which I believe Miss Saville is entirely ignorant," returned the old man quickly. "I really thought, Miss Dillon, that you took an interest—that you were most

particularly anxious about everything which concerned the honour of our family."

"Oh, certainly!" cried Lorry; "but I am not aware that the honour of your family will suffer by my going to the greenhouse with Mr. Vaughan."

"As this work seems nearly finished, perhaps the rest of the party will not object to accompany us," said the surgeon, who had no desire, in Emma's presence, to show any anxiety to enjoy a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Dillon.

"Oh, certainly, we will all follow!" cried Mrs. Dillon, who had now joined them, with several other guests, and taking Sir Charles's arm, as a matter of course, the old lady led him down the walk, after her daughter and Vaughan. All the rest of the company, except Emma, followed. She alone contrived to glide unobserved away, and turning into a shady path, where she was entirely hidden by the trees, she gladly found herself at liberty to reflect on the strange circumstances which were passing in so complicated a manner around her.

Little had she yet seen in her uncle's house either to love or esteem, yet the old Baronet's resemblance to her father, and his natural kindness of heart, which at times made itself felt through all his pride and vanity, caused her to pity him, and grieve that with a son yet living, and a grandson likely to prove worthy to inherit his honours, he yet thought himself without descendants. Attended by these relatives, his grey hairs might have gone down with honour to the grave, but it appeared now likely that he would become the prey of the heartless and interested intriguers by whom he was surrounded, if Captain Saville could not obtain his pardon, or persisted in concealing his existence.

But for little Harry's sake, even though his father might be unworthy of her interference, she was determined, if possible, to frustrate their designs. Young as she was, and inexperienced, the idea was only vague at first, and accompanied by no plan for putting it in execution. Gladly would she have confided the whole story to Vaughan, and sought his advice as to

the best way through the difficulties which surrounded her, but the promise of secrecy, which her cousin had exacted from her, rendered this impossible.

Charlton was her only counsellor, who knew the whole of Saville's adventures, and she felt perfectly confident that trust was safely reposed in him; yet still she had need of the aid of some one of her own class, who had more knowledge of social life than the pedlar.

She was but a woman, a young and tender woman, and though her resolves at times were high, she shrunk with the natural timidity of her sex from carrying out all which her intellect suggested, and would gladly have had a man's support, or have left the whole to man's direction.

Mr. Ashley, the rector, was the only one in whom she could place confidence, and eager likewise to see her little Harry, whom, she had no doubt, was pining during her absence, she resolved to visit them that afternoon, if she could possibly escape from Cleve, whilst Sir Charles

and his guests were taking their usual rides and drives.

Calmed by this decision, the time glided softly away for the next half hour, as she sat under the fragrant lime trees, so engaged by busy thoughts, as to be unconscious of the scene around her. And yet it was a pleasant place where she had found repose, chequered by shade and sunshine, which chased each other, with merry rustling, through the leaves, and danced over the moss-covered rocks, over the high banks and the soft grass, with endless variety of motion, whilst insects, birds, and breeze made that pleasant summer harmony which is the voice of nature.

And who shall say how that voice has stolen into the souls of men, who understood its language; how like a messenger from heaven, it has inspired the grandest thoughts, excited to the noblest deeds, or soothed the deepest anguish. Who shall say, how many dreams of Paradise it has revealed to the poet, or what peaceful bliss it has imparted to the simple shepherd's mind.

Even then, it soothed the anguish which Emma's estrangement from Vaughan occasioned her, and more hopeful, than she had been since the night he surprised her cousin at her door, she at length arose with the intention of proceeding without further delay, to the vicarage. She had heard the voice of Miss Dillon, with a party of equestrians, whose figures she had seen between the trees, as they rode towards the seacoast, and she had no doubt of being able to return to Cleve, before any one could notice her absence, even if she went round to the Red Cliff, to give its inmates warning of the danger which menaced them.

But she had proceeded only a little way towards the path leading across the meadows to the village of Winside, when she was met near the garden gate, by Mr. Ned Cranbourne, who eagerly accosted her.

"Mr. Dillon has sent me in search of you, Miss Saville," he said. "He has been miserable ever since you disappeared; but though Mr. Dillon does me the honour to send me on his errands, he is no particular favourite of

mine, or of yours either, Miss Saville, I suspect."

"My father placed great confidence in him," was all that Emma could reply.

"I am very sorry to hear it," said the little man sharply; "Sir Charles places great confidence in him, too, and I hope he may never have cause to repent it. He is a great speculator, and whenever they are together in private, there is so much talking about stocks and shares, and railroads, and gas, and exchange, and discounts, that I am sure the Baronet is perfectly bewildered. Dillon makes him believe that all these shares are prospering, but if that be the case, it is very odd, that Sir Charles is going to raise a mortgage upon the Cleve estate."

"Surely he cannot be in want of money," exclaimed Emma.

"What I tell you, is a fact, draw what conclusion you please," said Ned, "and as there is a report that the heir is still alive, it is a pity for him not to interfere, for the

estates are all entailed, except one, which is sold already."

The sudden change of Emma's countenance did not escape Cranbourne's observation, and sufficed to convince him, that she was aware of Captain Saville's return. The letter he had stolen at the vicarage, he had determined to turn to account, in order to subvert the influence of the Dillons, whom he detested, and he rejoiced to discover that he was likely to find an ally in Miss Saville. He had many reasons for being anxious to assist the banished heir. He had been tenderly attached to him in his youth, although his habit of tale bearing had done him, afterwards, much injury. If Cranbourne repented anything in his life, it was the mischief he had unintentionally done Captain Saville, and ever since the perusal of the stolen letter, his brain had been employed in devising means to repair it.

Unfortunately, his faculties were not equal to such a task, and he felt he must call in others, to assist him; and convinced that Miss Saville

was a true friend to her cousin, he proceeded to address her, with great volubility.

"It is no use making any more mystery," he said, "I know perfectly well, you are acquainted with the whole affair, and as I am sure you are anxious to bring it to a happy conclusion as soon as possible, I can only say, that I am ready to do all I can to assist you and those you wish to serve."

"You speak in riddles, Mr. Cranbourne," rejoined the lady with amazement.


"Oh, no, not to you," he replied. "You know more about it all than I do; but you may as well deal openly with me. I am an honest fellow in the main, and those Dillons must be got out root and branch, or the old house will be torn to pieces, even before the breath is out of the poor Baronet's body."

"You astonish me," returned Emma, unwilling to extend her confidence to such a man. "I thought you allowed all the intrigues at Cleve to go quietly on, even without observing them."

"I did so once," replied Ned, with a sly leer. "But I am roused at last. There are some affronts which it is impossible for even the meekest of men to pocket quietly. They consider me a fool, and treat me like a shoe black; but though the gnat may be small, it can sting."

The appearance of Mr. Dillon descending the staircase from the terrace effectually checked the flow of Ned's eloquence. But he did not retreat, and determining to disappoint the lawyer's hopes of a private interview with Miss Saville, he never left her side till she withdrew into the house.

It was then so near the dinner hour that she gave up all idea of visiting Mr. Ashley; yet anxious that no more time should be lost, she resolved to turn the evening to good account. She was strengthened in this purpose when she heard Sir Charles conversing with Dillon during dinner about the measures necessary to be taken for the arrest of a smuggler supposed to be concealed in the cottage at Red Cliff.



Dillon, never suspecting that he had the slightest personal interest in the affair, encouraged the old man's dictatorial folly, as he always did; for he cared little to what unlawful stretch of authority it excited him, provided he kept him in good humour. By engaging his vanity in a new pursuit he likewise hoped to weaken the influence of his sister Lorry.

But in this calculation the wily lawyer was entirely mistaken. It was true there was for the time a coolness between her and her old lover on the subject of Vaughan, but as the coquette had cunningly intended, this only increased her power. Though Sir Charles talked of other things, he thought only of her, and even whilst doing the honours of the dinner table he was thinking that the pretensions of other men to the hand of Miss Dillon must at once be put a stop to, and he finally determined that his fate must be decided that very evening.

Sir Charles Saville's nerves were no longer able to support for any length of time the delightful torment of a flirtation with such an ac-

complished adept in the art as Lorry Dillon. As she glanced slyly at him, from time to time during dinner, whilst she laughed and talked in the highest spirits with every other man at table, she began to fear that she might be straining the cord rather too tight.

It is a vain world, full of change; and the secret of its perpetual movement is that men, women, and children, are all alike pursuing some great or little toy from the cradle to the grave. No one is contented to be quiet, and Lorry Dillon least of all.

Lieutenant Blake was there, from the cavalry barracks in the neighbouring town, and increased the consternation of the Baronet by openly making love to her in his stupid way; but he was a man of family and fortune, and though Lorry laughed at his folly behind his back, her vanity, now she had discovered this, was gratified by his public attentions, and she was annoyed when her mother, in obedience to a glance from the master of the house, retired very quickly to the drawing-room.

It was a sultry evening, and the windows of a music-room adjoining were all thrown open, but they admitted scarcely a breath of air. The saucy flirt, who never gave herself the trouble to talk with women, or derived amusement from any society but that of men, left her mother and Miss Saville with the ladies in the saloon, and carelessly placed herself in the corner of the sofa, remote from all, in a recess from which a window opened on the lawn.

A small alabaster lamp hung high in this alcove, threw a faint and silvery light over the groups of exotic plants which adorned it, and athwart the trailing passion flowers and clematis, which crept around the railing of the stone steps without, gleaming through the transparent leaves, and on the scented flowers, as soft as moonshine.

The stillness of the quiet night air might have disposed a less turbulent mind than Lorry Dillon's to slumber, for even the babble of women's tongues in an adjoining room, was subdued and monotonous; but Miss Dillon had no senti-

ment, she cared neither for moonshine nor flowers; and sat very coolly making a mental calculation of the amount of the jointure Sir Charles Saville ought to settle upon her, and of the value of the furniture, plate, linen, and china, which would of course descend, after his decease, to the dowager Lady Saville. She little suspected how much of the Baronet's fortune had already passed into her brother's hands. The dowager Lady Saville! that was a charming idea; but she forgot it in devising a fancy ball at Cleve Court, immediately on her return from the wedding tour, which she decided should be to Paris. Her court dress was next considered, and the climax was, that the old man was to die within a year, and leave her his whole fortune. The dowager Lady Saville, with twenty thousand a year, would have all London at her feet, for what could be more glorious in a country where gold and fashion are omnipotent.

Yes that was the acmé of her ambition, unless Sir Charles's wealth could purchase her a coronet.

Poor old fool, the sooner she got rid of him the better.


Just as she had come to this conclusion the current of her thoughts was interrupted by the sound of cautious footsteps on the gravel walk before the window. Somewhat startled, and fancying that the old Baronet had perhaps come round that way from the dining room to surprise her in her usual seat, she looked with eager expectation towards the window.

What she beheld there made the current of her heart stand still. In the pale rays of the lamp, which fell upon the walk, stood the figure of a man, but not the Baronet. Pale, and wan, and worn, his tangled hair hanging wildly on either side of his haggard face, a coarse plaid wrapped like a winding sheet around his wasted figure, stood the only being for whom that now heartless woman, had ever felt the slightest touch of affection, gazing sternly at her, as if he had returned from the grave to reproach her for the iniquitous plans she was practising against his father. No; it was not the Baronet but his son,

who stood before her; that Captain Saville for whom, whilst Vaughan was courting her, she had conceived the most passionate love; and whom, when her double dealing was discovered, she had persecuted with the vengeance of jealousy, till she believed that he had met an early death by her own brother's hand.

Yet there he stood before her, changed fearfully; changed as one might be who had passed through the shadows of the grave, yet still unmistakably the lover of her youth, the faithless, the banished, and the slain.

All this passed through her mind as, paralyzed by terror, she yet gazed wildly at the figure, incapable of motion or of speech, and yet doubtful, whether or not her senses had deceived her. It was her guilty conscience, till then nearly deadened, which made the apparition terrible, even to that thoughtless and unprincipled woman. The eyes which met her gaze with fixed and angry glance, those thin parched lips, once pressed fondly to hers, though silent, spoke of stern disdain, and seemed to chill her blood,



though she saw them only for a minute. With a threatening gesture the form then vanished into the darkness of the night. The rays of the lamp, no longer intercepted, fell only on the gravel and the grass; when Lorry with a faint scream fell senseless to the ground.

Emma was the first who rushed to her assistance, for Mrs. Dillon, under such circumstances, was perfectly helpless, and her guests were too fine ladies to give themselves any trouble, even with the daughter of their hostess. They were dreadfully shocked that their nerves should be agitated by such a scene, and one fat widow, with a remarkably florid complexion, who had been interrupted in her account of the last royal ball, took up her smelling bottle, to prevent her fainting, and advised that Miss Dillon should be removed to her bedroom as soon as possible, as hysterics were exceedingly catching.


No one could assign any cause for the accident, and Lorry was too ill to account for it herself, even had she chosen to do so. Her mother asserted that it was occasioned by over fatigue,

her morning's ride, and the heat of the weather.

"My dear child's charming spirits are too much for her strength," she added, when she had consigned her daughter to the care of her lady's maid.

But Emma knew the truth. She had seen the figure of Captain Saville, an instant before the scream of Lorry had alarmed the company, and she well knew how to interpret her terror. But she was not at liberty to dispel it; she was unable to go to her and say frankly, you have seen no spirit but a living man, and as perhaps such a disclosure might have done serious injury to the father of little Harry, she was glad, that the promise he had exacted from her compelled her to remain silent.

When the gentlemen came from their wine into the drawing room, the only person who seemed to care about Lorry's indisposition, was Sir Charles Saville. One or two men, finding the conclusion of the evening rather dull, asked carelessly what had become of Miss Dillon, but



when informed that she was indisposed, they forgot the fact immediately, for when Miss Dillon could no longer flatter their vanity, or excite their dormant faculties, by her gay banter, they cared nothing about her. Lieutenant Blake had previously been obliged by duty to return to his quarters, and sat up drinking nearly the whole of the night. And it would have been just the same had Lorry been dead.

And yet young and beautiful women in crowds are fools enough to sacrifice everything that is pure, and sacred, and enduring in domestic life, to reject the high calling of being the treasured wives of the virtuous, the talented, or the brave, if they be poor, in order to enjoy the empty admiration of such selfish men, who like themselves are whirled forward in the great machine of society, till they are callous to every feeling, but the desire of momentary enjoyment.

Emma was greatly agitated by the appearance of Saville, at a time and place so dangerous for himself, and so likely when made known, to

aggravate the persecution with which he was already threatened. She had little doubt that Lorry, as soon as she was able, would recount the whole circumstance, even if she suppressed the name of him whose figure she had beheld, and she felt glad of the temporary delay of such disclosures, which her cousin's illness occasioned. It might afford her time to warn Saville of the danger which menaced him.

But as if Dillon had some suspicions that she wished to absent herself from the company, his attentions to her that evening were unremitting. It was in vain that several of the officers, who had heard the report that Miss Saville was to be her uncle's heir, attempted to attract her attention; Dillon made them feel in the most quiet way imaginable, that he allowed no one to interpose between him and his fair cousin, and when at length, with calm assurance, he had banished all pretenders to her favour, he laid aside the light supercilious manner he usually adopted in society, and assuming the tone of deep feeling, he talked to her with the earnest-

ness and simplicity of an old sincere friend and admirer, who was sure of possessing her sympathy and confidence.

Emma did not like this; she felt that it was in some measure compromising her in the eyes of those present; and giving him short answers, she endeavoured as much as possible, without being absolutely rude, to make him understand that she took no interest in his conversation. But she could not escape him.

That man had cunning arts and wiles which Emma could not cope with. He asked a hundred questions about little Harry, and seemed to take such an interest in her replies that she forgot her resolution to be silent. He talked of Mr. Ashley, and of his own satisfaction that she was no longer at Winside, but had returned to the home of her family, and her proper place in society.

"You must not be alarmed," he said, "by my sister's gaiety of manner. She is a well meaning kind-hearted creature, though her high spirits and natural frankness carry her at times a little

too far. You will like her, I hope, when you know her better."

"It is neither my inclination nor my duty to criticise Miss Dillon," was Emma's unusually caustic reply. "Our objects in life are so very different that there is little chance of our understanding each other."

"Yet I wish you could," answered Dillon, in a soft and thrilling voice. "There are few things would give me more pleasure than for my sister to possess your regard, except, my dear Emma, if I may venture to say so, the hope of winning it for myself."

"I beg your pardon, but I see I am wanted at the piano," said the girl, quickly arising, and looking past the lawyer at the little crowd around the instrument, as if she had not heard a word of his last speech. "Will you allow me to pass?"

Mr. Dillon, who had placed his chair so directly before her as to cut off her communication with the rest of the company, finding his plan completely frustrated by her quiet courtesy,

started up without appearing the least offended at the manner in which she had received his advances, and smiling, as was usual with him, seemed only bent on complying with her wishes. He determined still to persevere in his addresses, for he had a great contempt for women, and believed that few could resist him, and resolved when he once had her in his power, to make her bitterly repent the annoyance she had given him by her impertinent assumption of indifference.

He had a strong suspicion that Vaughan had already won her regard; though he had not failed to remark the reserve which kept them apart, he fancied he perceived that it was not caused by any mutual dislike, and suspecting that it was only the consequence of some lover's quarrel, an intense feeling of jealousy added bitterness to the hatred he had long felt for the surgeon.

But though from time to time he pressed his thin lips firmly together, and sought to devise some subtle plan of revenge, he was still the flattering, smiling man of the world, who en-

chanted Sir Charles Saville, and delighted every woman in the company, except Emma, by his elegance and small talk.

Such is the hypocrisy which attains the greatest success in fashionable life; above all, when a man has wealth and position to enhance his attractions.

After a duet had been commenced by two young ladies, Emma soon found an opportunity of escaping to her own room. Convinced that Dillon was then too fully engaged to watch her movements, she lost not a moment in idle reflection, but hastily wrapping a shawl around her, and tying on a close straw bonnet, she hurried down a back staircase, and unperceived by any one, left the house by a side door which led into the gardens, at a part remote from the apartments where the company was then assembled.

CHAPTER VII.

THE night was very dark, when Emma Saville crossed the grounds of Cleve Court, towards a gate which she knew led out by a way little frequented, into the open fields. She was alone, yet she felt no terror, for she was as it were, inspired with more than usual energy and courage, by the motive which induced her to quit her home without protection, at such an hour.

She knew that the moon would soon arise, and as her daily walks made her well acquainted with the country, she never doubted that she should be able to find her way. It was to Nanny's cot-

tage at the Red Cliff, that she directed her steps.

Often did she think of Vaughan, as she crossed the dewy fields, and of the hopes of happiness she had once ventured to indulge; even now, she had little doubt of his affection, but she dreaded, lest should he be aware of her continued interference in Saville's affairs, he might so resent it, that all chance of a reconciliation between them would be for ever at an end. Gladly would she have asked his advice, as to the plan she was now pursuing, or have delegated the task to him, but both were impossible, and she felt, that strange as her conduct might appear, if known to others, that the danger which menaced her cousin, left her no power of avoiding it.

Emma Saville possessed a moral or may we be permitted to call it, a nervous courage, when conscious of a good purpose, which triumphed over the gentleness of her nature, and bore her on through many difficulties, with a strength which seemed more than her own.

That night her mind was so excited by the events of the previous day, and her strong desire to restore her cousin and his little son to their rights, that she actually forgot that there was anything unusual in her conduct, till the silver light of the moon shooting above the eastern hills, and bathing the motionless clouds above in its brightness, attracted her attention, and made her sensible of the lateness of the hour.

Yet such was her love of nature, that she rejoiced that she was abroad in the fields, to see how the light came stealing over the mists above the river, how it gleamed around the edges of the pine trees on the hill, and then rose high above them, shining with soft and humid radiance, over the whole landscape, where all lay still, as if nature, like a human soul, was soothed by the pure and placid rays.

Emma Saville never forgot that night and its exceeding beauty, and in spite of the anxiety she still felt as to Vaughan's displeasure, often in after life that midnight walk across the dew

bespangled fields recurred to her mind, as one of those brief and bright passages of existence, which arise out of the oblivion of the past, like pillars, which remain to mark the progress of some journey to the grave, long after the foot prints between them have been swept away.

It was a lonely country, which extended from Cleve Court to the Red Cliff, but Emma rejoiced in this, there being thus, little chance of her meeting anyone by the way. Nor did she; and the first thing which occasioned her the least alarm, was the furious barking of the dog, when she approached Nanny's cottage. She knew this animal was commonly let loose during the night, and that should it attack her, no one was likely to call it off, as in all probability the inhabitants of the cottage were then all asleep; or, if watching, were not likely to suppose that any stranger would approach this secluded dwelling at such an hour, with an honest intent.

But Emma had provided against this difficulty, and throwing to the dog the food she had brought

with her, he came up and smelt her, seemed to recognize her, showed no further anger, and was soon busily engaged in devouring the contents of the basket. She then advanced to the cottage door, and rapped long and loudly for admission.

For several minutes no notice was taken of the summons, but after she had repeated it still louder than before, she heard some one moving within. Presently a light gleamed through the hole in the shutters; and then a voice which she knew to be Nanny's, demanded who was there, and what they wanted at such an hour.

Emma answered in a few hasty words, and her voice being at once recognized, the door was quickly opened, and the old woman welcomed her with expressions of great astonishment.

Nanny had arisen from her bed in some alarm, and hastily thrown an old red cloak around her. With her wrinkled face and arms, and her disordered hair, only half concealed by a cotton handkerchief, she presented a figure, which contrasted strongly with that of the fair young lady,

whom to light over the threshold of her mud floored cottage she held the candle on high.

"Heaven bless you, my dear child," she said, "what can bring you here at such a time? Surely nothing has happened to master Harry, or the old Baronet has not turned you out of doors?"

"No, no; I have not come here on my own concerns," replied Miss Saville, "but let me sit down, Nanny, for I have much to say to you."

The woman then carefully barred the door, and placing the candle on a table, sat down beside her young visitor; full of anxiety and curiosity, though all the while pretending to appear as calm as if she had no secret in her keeping.

Neither of them spoke, and the ticking of the old clock, going steadily its round as it had done for many years, amidst all the troubles, and sorrows, and cares, which had found their way even into that secluded hovel, had something awful in its monotony. Suddenly there was a noise as of a person moving in the loft above,

and Emma, turning pale, laid her trembling hand on Nanny's arm.

"For mercy sake, do not allow him to come here," she said.

"Who do you suppose can come here, at such an hour of the night?" asked the woman, in a careless tone; but yet she cast a look of uneasiness towards a dark corner of the kitchen, where a door leading to a staircase was hidden in deep shadow.

"Captain Saville is here already," said Emma in an eager whisper. "I would not for worlds that he should know that I have come here alone, at such an hour."

"Captain Saville!" repeated Nanny, with pretended amazement, though her eyes fell beneath Emma's glance.

"Nanny," rejoined the girl, in a low but earnest voice, "deceit with me is useless; I have seen and spoken with him, and I know that he is concealed here. You are his friend, and do your duty bravely; but with me, it is needless to make any further mystery. Be assured,

I do not come to injure him. Is Captain Saville still beneath this roof?"

"Well, my dear, since you seem to know so much," answered the old woman, "I may as well confess that he is sleeping in the loft above."

"Then it must be for the last time," returned Emma. "He has been traced hither, and though not recognised, very dangerous reports are in circulation. They have been repeated to Sir Charles Saville. He appears to bear you some particular enmity, and has been easily persuaded that your house is the resort of smugglers."

"Poor foolish old man!" exclaimed Nanny scornfully. "He has never forgiven me that I was a witness to his son's marriage."

"He believes that Captain Saville is the leader of some dangerous band, without knowing who he really is," continued the girl. "A warrant will speedily be issued for his arrest, as implicated in a recent attack on the coast guard, and your house will probably be searched to-

morrow, both for the offender and for smuggled goods."

"And you have come from Cleve Court to give us warning, my dear?" inquired her hostess, looking with tearful eyes in Emma's face.

"Why else should I be here?" she returned. "If I had waited till the morning, it would have been impossible for Captain Saville to have eluded pursuit in the light of day, nor could I well have got hither unobserved."

"Ah, you are a true child of your father," replied Nanny, "and you have a heart to pity misfortune. But you will be rewarded for it. It never can be heaven's will that the heir should be hunted by his own father, like a wild beast of the forest."

"But Sir Charles has no suspicion that his son is yet alive."

"So much the better, for he never showed him a father's love, since he was old enough to have a will of his own. There is nobody the poor Captain has so much to dread as his own relatives. That Dillon has been the ruin of

him, and will be the ruin of the Baronet, too, if a stop is not soon put to his intrigues. I always wondered your father could have such trust in him. His oily tongue and his glittering spectacles have something more fearful to me than the rudest words and the keenest eyes I ever beheld."

"I must be gone," said Emma arising; "you will rouse my cousin as soon as I am out of the house, and persuade him to seek another retreat as quickly as possible."

"I hardly think they could do him any harm if he staid here," answered the woman.

"He will be brought before the magistrates at Winside," returned the girl, "and his father is one of them. Tell him that, and then let him decide whether he prefers concealment or publicity."

"If Emma Saville takes an interest in my fate, I am ready to be guided by her opinion in every way," were the words uttered close to Emma's elbow, in a voice which she knew at once to be that of her unfortunate cousin.

For a moment she trembled; then quickly recovering her composure, she turned and regarded Captain Saville with a calm, proud glance, without reproach, but without a trace of tenderness.

"I have cherished your child," she said, "and I would fain rescue his father from obloquy and danger."

"Is that all?" he returned. "Then Miss Saville may spare her pains. I am master of my own position, and was as well aware as you appear to be of the designs which my tender relatives have now in agitation. I have trusty spies, and though I scorn my father's inheritance on my own account, I am resolved that my son shall not be deprived of it by a nest of unprincipled sharpers. Neither shall you—you—whose image since we first met in India, has been my idol in danger, in banishment, sickness, and captivity, be wrested from me, and made the victim of a vile hypocrite like Dillon."

"If you are self confident in your power to cope with your enemies, I am not less so," re-

joined Emma, drawing herself up to her full height, and standing before her impassioned cousin, pale, calm, and dignified as an ancient statue. "I have no need of your assistance to elude the wiles of a Dillon, or twenty such as he."

Frank Saville gazed at her with undisguised admiration, and her beauty curbed the anger her words might have excited.

"You and your father, Emma," he said, "are the only relatives from whom I have ever experienced kindness;" and his eyes filled with tears as he gazed tenderly upon her. "Do not then let us quarrel, when we are both so alone in the world. You cannot love those creatures at Cleve Court, of that I am perfectly sure, and feel no jealousy. They are not even worthy of your society, and I would fain snatch you from such contamination. You know how tenderly I have long loved you, and most fondly would I cherish you, if you would consent to fly with me to another land, far from the cold and heartless pursuit of false and calculating men. What have you here to

resign? Nothing but poverty and dependence; and though I am not rich, I yet possess the means to provide you all the decent comforts of life. If need were, I would work for you till death, the willing slave of love. My boy shall go with us, Emma; you will be a mother to him, and you will wean his father from the wild faults and errors of youth, and by your gentle nature, will ennoble his. Think not, Emma, that I am yet quite lost. No, not that. There is a strong fountain of affection in this heart, which neither sorrow nor persecution has yet dried up; and where there is much love, there is still hope of virtue. Oh! trust me; love me, Emma, and trust me, if you would save a soul."

Tears chased each other down Saville's cheeks as he uttered this passionate appeal, and holding his fair cousin by the arm, gazed wildly on her agitated countenance; and she, too, long before he had ceased speaking, was weeping silently.

"Take him, my dear," said old Nanny, pressing the girl's hand, "make him a true and

loving wife, and you will be the saving, here and hereafter, of one, who though he may have erred, has been purified by the deep waters of affliction."

"My dear cousin," said Emma solemnly, without having understood the purport of the old woman's words, "love is beyond our command! I told you long ago, and it pains me to be obliged to repeat it, that I cannot return your affection in the way you desire; but believe me, I am most sincerely your friend."

"Friend!" echoed Saville, with a fierce and angry gesture, "I never asked for your friendship. I detest friends, for their falsehood has been my ruin."

"I can never be more to you," returned the girl in a sweet low voice, which, slightly tremulous, seemed to vibrate through the heart of her listener. "Nay, you force me, in order to avoid the recurrence of such painful scenes, to confess to you that my heart has made choice of another man."

"If that man be Dillon," exclaimed Saville,

striking his clenched hand with passionate violence on the deal table, near which he stood, "he shall not live to consummate his iniquity, by making you his wife."

"It is not Dillon," said Emma, in a scarcely audible voice, for it cost her much to speak as she had done, of a feeling, which nothing but the hope of putting an end to Saville's addresses, could have compelled her to betray.

Saville stood still, and gazed intently at her for more than a minute, with silent but profound anguish.

"Just Heaven! does every creature forsake and cast me off," he murmured at length; then sinking down on a chair, he hid his face with his hands, and burst into a wild and passionate weeping.

When Emma beheld the convulsions of his despair and agony, and heard his heart-rending sobs, she shrunk with anguish and almost terror, from this spectacle of strong unbridled passion; but though she pitied her cousin, she could offer him no consolation, and she felt more than

ever that she could never have found happiness in a union with such a man.

Yet she was not sorry for the disclosure she had made, for she hoped when the violence of his grief had subsided, and he knew that all hope of winning her love was for ever at an end, their intercourse for the future might be no more disturbed by the outbursts of his passion.

Though old Nanny was greatly pained by the affliction of Saville, she was too sensible not to feel that Emma had acted nobly and wisely in daring to speak the truth, and she knew the Captain's character too well to fear that he would resent it. But the nurse's heart was sorry for her darling; she too had suffered keenly in her youth, and had felt the anguish of disappointed love.

At length Emma approached her cousin, and laying her hand upon his arm, she said gently:

"It is time for me to depart. I came hither to warn you to avoid arrest by seeking another abode, and believe me it would be well for you to leave this house before daybreak."

Saville did not answer her at first. A great struggle was going on in his heart, and he had no power to speak. Emma stood silently beside him. She hoped that the occurrences of that night would have a beneficial influence on his character, and by arousing his better nature, might effect a change, not only in his feelings, but in his destiny.

Great as his trials and misfortunes had been, there was no doubt that they had been the consequences of his own faults and follies; aggravated at first, by the artful wickedness of some, and the unkindness of others, until latterly the want of friends and affections had driven him almost to desperation.

She believed that only kindness could redeem a character, which even when most astray, had retained many noble qualities. Nor would she leave him, however anxious to regain her home, until assured, that she had done all in her power to complete the good work, which she hoped she had that night begun.

Her silent patience probably contributed to

sooth the anguish of Saville, for he at length suddenly arose, and held out his hand towards her.

“Though you will not be my wife,” he said, “you are my guardian angel. I owe you unspeakable thanks for your kindness to my boy, but much more for the forbearance with which you have now treated me, and the confidence you have reposed in me. I had sad need of human kindness, and yours has come at a moment when my loneliness and my despair were driving me on to madness, or to crime. You tell me your heart is engaged. Well, so be it, I can feel now, that I never was, and never can be worthy to possess it. I brought the only woman who ever trusted me to an untimely grave, and yours must be a happier fate than hers. I thank you, my dear cousin, for the confidence you have reposed in me; it was wisely done, for nothing else could have arrested the torrent of my passion. I dare not ask who is the object of your choice, but I rejoice that it is not Dillon.”

Saville's lips trembled as he spoke, and he

gazed eagerly at Emma, when she again assured him that the lawyer was the object of her detestation.

"I know the evil he has done you," she added, "and I have come hither now, to prevent his discovering that you are alive, and likely to dispute with him the possession of your father's estate. But there is no time to be lost, and you must be reconciled to Sir Charles before Miss Dillon is established at Cleve Court as his wife."

"There surely can be no danger of such an enormity?" demanded Saville eagerly, his versatile mind now turning with restored vivacity to a new object.

"I have seen much since I have been beneath my uncle's roof," said Emma quietly. "Mrs. Dillon and her daughter are both taking equal pains to become Lady Saville, but were you once more in your father's house, their object would be frustrated."

"If I risk my life, it shall be done," replied Saville. "It would be worse than all the

punishments which have yet fallen upon me, to see Lorry Dillon the mistress of Cleve Court."

"Be prudent, my dear cousin," rejoined the girl; "remember that little Harry's future welfare depends upon your conduct at the present crisis. If you have need of advice, can you not trust Mr. Vaughan, your old friend, who now resides at Winside. He knows your whole story, and understands the present circumstances of the family."

"I once believed him my friend," returned Captain Saville; "and I applied to him to stand by me in the most difficult passage of my life, but I was already disgraced, and he disdained all communication with a man whose name was dishonoured. I had given him credit for sufficient moral courage to remain true to the unfortunate, but I was mistaken; and he left me unsupported and alone, to meet Dillon in the duel in which I was supposed to have lost my life. I despise the friendship of such a man, whose virtue is prudence, and whose attachments cannot resist adversity. Whatever his profes-

sion, he lacks the honour of a gentleman. But what right have I to talk of honour," he cried, suddenly interrupting himself.

"You are wrong if you accuse Vaughan of the want of it," said Emma firmly. "He did obey your summons, but your letter was unfortunately detained, and being absent from England, he never received it till many days after it was written. He then hastened to Ghent, but arrived only in time to attend your pretended funeral."

"Emma, are you sure of this?"

"Most positive. Ask Robin Charlton, who was then your servant. He can tell you how much Mr. Vaughan lamented his delay, and reproached himself as the involuntary cause of your death. He is aware now of his mistake; he has seen and recognized you, but probably Nanny has contrived to conceal your residence here from him, as she sought to do from me."

"And I was right, my dear," said the old woman, "a trust is a sacred thing, though there are too many now a-days set lightly by it."

"Am I then not to believe that Vaughan avoided me from contempt or disgust?" demanded Saville eagerly.

"Mr. Vaughan is just," replied the girl. "I have no doubt that he deeply regrets the misfortunes of your life, and would gladly assist to extricate you from them."

"I know his noble nature well," rejoined Saville, fixing a searching glance on Emma's changing countenance; "you have made a wise choice, he is a better man than I ever was," and then, as if the thought of the surgeon being preferred by his cousin filled him with agony, he strode to the further end of the hovel.

When he returned he no more spoke of Vaughan, but opened the door, and looked out into the grey twilight, which was beginning to dawn.

"Miss Saville," he said, "if you intend to reach Cleve before sunrise, you must set off without delay, and I am ready to accompany you."

"That is needless," she quickly replied, "as I came, I can return alone."

Then hastily wishing Nanny farewell, she approached her cousin and held out her hand to him.

"We part friends," she said, "and I trust shall ever remain so."

"We do not part here," was Saville's reply. "You have dared much, to do me a great service, and I should be unworthy of your friendship if I allowed you to cross the country a second time unprotected."

And then, with the quietness of a man whose will is too firm to bear opposition, he closed the cottage door, and strode on before her, calling to the dog to remain quiet, and opening the gate for her to pass.

Emma would infinitely have preferred solitude to such companionship, but she knew that opposition was vain. Self-will and obstinacy had been her cousin Frank's characteristics from a boy, and it was well when they were only active in so good a cause. But though her position was most painful, and she dreaded encountering any one on her way, she did not feel that she had

done wrong. She had been actuated by the noblest motives, and she trusted that she had not only succeeded in putting her cousin on his guard against the designs of his enemies, but that her interview with him had convinced him of the impossibility of her returning his attachment, and had freed her from all danger of his further persecuting her by his addresses. She believed too that she had revived his confidence in his fellow-creatures; excited the better part of his nature to activity, and though she had disappointed his passion, she could not doubt that she had softened his heart. He had in truth been touched by her gentle kindness, and his thoughts were more sad than angry, as they walked on for some distance in silence.

In the mean time the sun was ascending towards the horizon, and before they had crossed the fields every object around them became distinctly visible.

Their way towards Cleve Court lay partly along the brink of the steep banks of the river, and though a mist hung over its waters, the

sound of its scanty stream, fretting over the rocks could be heard softly mingling with the murmur of the west wind through the hedges. The cows lay tranquil on the grass; only a stray bird twittered from time to time amongst the bushes; the cowslips and the daisies were still closed and sleeping, and in the heavenly peace which lay upon the scene, there was a soothing power, a pure stillness, which charmed even the troubled soul of Captain Saville to unwonted tranquillity, as if to complete the reformation already begun.


“Emma,” he said, suddenly standing still, and gazing first on her and then on all around him, “however I may have erred, it is a bitter punishment to return thus, an outlaw and disguised, to the fields of my childhood. Look at that oak, how often have I climbed it for the blackbird’s nest. How often have I scrambled amongst those thick hazles in the dingle before us when the nuts were ripe. Those were merry days! and if I then thought at all, it was only to dream of something brighter to come. But the

merry days are gone, long, long ago, and the hope—oh! Emma, where is that? Never, never more are there bright dreams for me! Had my poor mother lived—but no, no! that would have availed nothing. Even she could not have saved me from my own self-confidence and folly, and the deceit of others!”

“But the worst is past,” replied Emma, kindly. “You will get the better of your enemies, and when you are reconciled to your father, and you and little Harry are living with him at Cleve Court, you will be happier than you have ever been.”

Saville shook his head; he liked to listen to her consolation, but his heart was too full for words, nor did either speak again until they entered the old and tangled woods which divided the open fields from the pleasure grounds of Sir Charles Saville.

It was a lovely place, wild and uncultured, but rich in the tangled luxuriance of almost every variety of tree. The old Wyche Elm threw its fantastic boughs over the green holly,



and the honeysuckle hung waving from the branches of the tall beeches; the hazel and young lime trees grew together in brushwood, and stretched their roots to the margin of a little brook, which gurgled along over mossy rocks in the pleasant shade. The ground was blue with hyacinths, and when the rays of the sun pierced to this green recess, the blossoms of a thousand tiny flowers seemed to rise from the floor of withered leaves, and open to bid them welcome, even before the awakening birds commenced their morning carol.

“And this is my home!” exclaimed Saville, suddenly pausing. “No place on this wide earth, has ever seemed to me so beautiful. In the hot plain of India, how often have I thought of these pleasant nooks, which I hoped not then to revisit! Oh, why, fool that I was, did I forfeit such a paradise? why was I deluded by a friend? Even my marriage, my father would have forgiven, had I gone myself, and confessed it to him; but I was persuaded to brave him, to conceal my debts from him,

to resort to base ways to procure money, and when finally in a state of unconsciousness, I was made by Dillon, to sign my name at the back of his forged bills, I was completely in his power. My creditors clamoured for money, and having appealed to my father in vain, I fled the country, and was outlawed. This was entirely brought about by Dillon's machinations, in order that my dishonour might entirely estrange my father from me. Robin Charlton first discovered and disclosed to me, the whole extent of these diabolical schemes, and my duel with Dillon was the consequence. I had already heard of my poor wife's death, and I gladly sought to escape from disgrace, by imposing a story of my death, upon the world. But that was folly, Emma, passionate folly, like all the rest of my life. Your father, to whom I discovered myself in India, first taught me to live to retrieve my lost honour, and to recover my inheritance for my son. Other hopes then sprang up in my heart, to give a value to existence, but those likewise have proved false.

I have returned to find only the agony of remorse," and Saville hid his face in his hands, to hide the tears he could no more restrain.

"Without such sorrow, there is no lasting amendment," returned Emma softly, "and believe me, you shall yet walk in the woods, with your own precious boy, a better and a happier man than when you first trod them."

"Those are kind words, Emma," answered her cousin. "I would I could believe them, but what depresses me most since I returned to my home, is the consciousness that I have not deserved to be happy. Nevertheless, I will not yield to despair. It is seldom I am so weak, as I have now shown myself, for I have a stubborn spirit, my fair cousin, and am resolved to battle with life bravely, till all is won or lost. That gang at Cleve Court shall not triumph, if I perish in the upsetting their schemes. They shall hear more of me before the day is past, and now as the sun is in the sky, and you have only the garden to cross," he added, "we must needs part. Guided by your advice I shall no

longer inhabit Nanny's cottage, and should anything occur to make my services needful, either to you or my boy, send Robin in quest of me. Heaven bless you, Emma, and may the man you love prove worthy of you;" so saying, Saville eagerly seized her hands, pressed them to his lips, and before she could remonstrate, or reply, had rushed away into the thickest part of the woods.

Two minutes afterwards, she was joined by Ned Cranbourne, who appeared from behind a rustic summer house, as little expected by Emma as an apparition of Puck or Robin Goodfellow.

She looked anxiously at him, to ascertain, if possible, from his countenance, whether he was aware that Saville had recently been with her; but though his eyes appeared busily looking out for accidents, she could not understand their expression.

"Miss Saville is an early riser," he said, "and to judge by her shoes, she has walked far."

"Has Mr. Cranbourne arisen so early to keep

a watch upon my movements," demanded Emma gravely.

"Oh, no, not to watch you in particular," answered the little man, "but I have to look about me. Few things escape my observation. But to be candid, I suspect we have got up early this morning both for the same purpose, namely, to put a friend upon his guard by a timely hint. Don't start and look so frightened, my dear young lady, I am Captain Saville's friend, and had I suspected in the least that he was old Nanny's lodger, I never would have hinted a word about the apparition to Sir Charles Saville. I am quite wild to think what mischief I have made."

"But how have you discovered the truth?" demanded the girl.

"Your story about little Harry's father made me suspect it, and I have seen you with the Captain this morning," answered Ned. "But don't be alarmed, Miss Saville, I am ready to serve you both, and if you have an attachment for your cousin, it may be the saving of him. His

father would be reconciled to him directly; the Dillons would be thrown out of the saddle, and the heir would take his proper place again."

"You go too fast!" cried Miss Saville, more annoyed than she chose to discover; "there is no love between me and my cousin. We are so nearly related; I look on him as a brother."

"Brother! very likely," retorted Cranbourne. "A handsome man and a pretty girl, when they happen to be single, don't play long at that game."

"But we can never be more than friends," said Emma, somewhat severely, "and I must request that unless you wish to do serious injury to both of us, you do not repeat any idle surmises to the contrary."

Emma was indignant at this little fellow presuming to play the spy upon Saville and herself, yet aware that they were in his power, she was afraid to show the anger she felt, and was now, more than ever, anxious to escape from him.

Cranbourne saw her uneasiness, and endea-

voured to tranquillize her by making many protestations of his desire to serve the son of Sir Charles Saville, were it only to mortify the Dillons. He said he intended to find out the Captain, having circumstances of great importance to communicate to him.

"He must not leave this neighbourhood at this critical moment," he added, "though he had better find another hiding place; but he must have his rights, and the Dillons must be got out of Cleve. They have insulted me; I tell you candidly I am a proud man, and I will have my revenge."

"I thought you appeared excellent friends," said Emma, turning with astonishment to her companion when he had uttered these words in a sharp voice.

"Oh, yes, excellent friends!" answered the little man with a bitter laugh. "We could hang one another with pleasure to-morrow, I have no doubt of it. But we are obliged to eat at the same table, so we are very good friends! That is

the world. Humbug from top to bottom. But I like to understand it, and I do understand it better than such coxcombs as Dillon give me credit for. If I were rich, he would be civil, in order to plunder me as he does Sir Charles Saville; but I am poor, and he insults me. He shall repent it before long, and both he and his saucy sister would be surprised to learn how much I know; and I can discover more yet, and I will speak to Captain Saville this very day. I suppose I shall find him at the Red Cliff?"

"I warned him to leave it," returned Emma. "He must endeavour to avoid the constables, whom you have sent in pursuit of him. You will serve him best by refraining for the future to meddle with his affairs."

So saying, Miss Saville walked away, leaving the little man somewhat perplexed how he was next to proceed.

But he was not in the least offended; though Emma had rebuked him, it was without insolence; he knew that both she and her cousin

Frank were generous and kind-hearted, and he was determined to serve them. Their passing displeasure was very different from the heartless, calm insolence of Dillon, which stung even Ned's careless nature to the quick.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER Emma regained her own room she had time to take several hours' repose before she was summoned to join the party at Sir Charles Saville's breakfast table. Then, fresh and blooming, no one had the least suspicion how she had passed the night, and Ned Cranbourne, though he gave her a very sly glance, as she entered the room, did not betray her.

Mr. Dillon, as if unconscious of the rebuff she had given him the previous evening, seated himself next to her, and divided his attention between her and a partridge pie, which Cran-

bourne extolled to the skies, well-knowing that his patron was as proud of his family recipes as of his family arms, though he had too much pride to appear so.

Mrs. Dillon sweetened the Baronet's coffee, and smiled upon him, well satisfied that she was bewitching, with her back to the light, in a charming Parisian morning cap. But the old gentleman only listened to her when she answered his enquiries about her daughter, who had not yet appeared.

Lorry had passed a sleepless night, she said; she feared she was going to have a serious illness.

"Mr. Vaughan talked yesterday about the small-pox being at Winside," she added, "and it would be dreadful if he had brought the infection to my sweet daughter."

"Good heavens! Madam," cried the Baronet, "don't talk in such a light manner of such a fearful calamity. Do you know what the small-pox is? It is worse than the plague, for that only kills you, but the small-pox makes you

hideous for the remainder of your life. I would not have such a complaint in my house for the wealth of California. Miss Dillon must be removed, Madam; she must be removed without an hour's delay."

"And where is Miss Dillon to be removed to, dear Sir Charles?" said a soft voice at the Baronet's elbow, which in his excited state made him absolutely start with terror, and he looked first with amazement at the delicate fingers which were laid upon his arm, and then on the pretty, smiling face of Lorry, which bent over his shoulder, without bearing any signs of the malady, one symptom of which would have made him, for self-preservation, send the charmer, without scruple or compassion, from his house.

"Good Heavens, Miss Dillon," he exclaimed starting at once from his seat, and shaking off her fair and jeweled hand, "what brings you here in such a state? Are you not ordered to keep your bed. For your own sake, for the sake of others, this is very improper. You may

infect the whole household with this terrible malady."

"Malady! Sir Charles," cried Lorry, laughing more gaily than before; "do you suppose that I have the plague, that you wish to banish me from your presence?"

"No, my dear young lady, not that," answered the old man, who regarded her with perplexed amazement. "Not the plague, but something almost as bad."

"The heart ache?" demanded Lorry archly.

"The small pox, Miss Dillon," returned Sir Charles, with solemn gravity.

Unwilling to be rude, yet anxious to escape from the danger of infection, he had continued, during the course of this conversation, to retreat gradually further and further from the fair invalid.

"The small pox!" echoed the girl with a merry laugh, "upon my word, Sir Charles, you must be dreaming, to get such a fancy into your head."

"Madam, Miss Dillon," stammered the

Baronet, drawing himself up with dignity, "I am not aware that I am apt to take fancies; but your mother—I understood Mrs. Dillon to say, that you were suffering from an attack of the small pox."

"Do I look very like it?" demanded Lorry in a deprecating tone, as she approached her old lover, glowing with conscious beauty.

Sir Charles was very perplexed, but he thought she was the handsomest creature he had ever beheld in his life, and his admiration soon made him forget his terror.

"I had the small pox when I was three years old," continued the girl, "but mamma has been fearing all her life that it would destroy her beauty. I assure you, I never felt better in my life, so you need not send me out of the house, unless you are heartily tired of me."

"That can never be, dear Miss Dillon," said the Baronet softly, "but I heard you were suddenly taken ill last evening."

"Yes, the room was very hot," replied Lorry quickly; "I was anxious and worried," she con-

tinued almost in a whisper, when after saluting the other guests, she took a seat at the table, which the Baronet placed for her next his own.

"I am grieved that you should have any cause for anxiety in this house," he returned in the same tone.

Miss Dillon raised her large eyes, and fixed on him a most expressive glance.

"If I could do anything to remove it," he murmured, and took her hand under the table cloth.

Lorry looked down, but Sir Charls felt the pressure of her delicate fingers, which were not withdrawn. He was in an ecstasy.

A loud discussion was going on amongst the rest of the party, so that this tender scene passed unobserved by all, except Ned Cranbourne, who, having come in late, was taking his breakfast at a side table behind the lovers, where he heard every word that was exchanged between them.

"This is no place to talk of feelings, my dear Miss Dillon," said Sir Charles, glancing at the

company, which had partly arisen and stood talking eagerly round the room, "but we must understand each other better for the future; and if you will grant me a private interview—"

More he had not time to say, for a sudden crash close behind them made the old Baronet start with consternation from his seat, and Lorry to look round with amazement, not unmixed with mirth.

Ned Cranbourne had adroitly given his little table a timely push, so that at this critical moment it came with its whole contents to the ground, and there he lay himself amongst a confused medley of shattered tea cups and boiling water, coffee and cream, buttered muffins and broken eggs. His chair had slipped out behind him on the polished boards surrounding the carpet, as the table gave way to his pressure. This was rather more than he intended; but it served most effectually to retard the declaration, and postpone the appointment between Lorry and her elderly lover.

Though Sir Charles was exceedingly inclined

to be angry, the laughter of the company, and the commiseration which politeness compelled him to show for Ned's accident, restrained the expression of his irritation.

Emma was the first person present who assisted Cranbourne to rise, and in the midst of his mortification at making such a ridiculous appearance before the assembled guests of Cleve Court, he remarked this with gratitude. Though he gave her little thanks at the time, he treasured her kindness in his heart, and added it to the store of affection he had already conceived for her.

Unloving and unloved, Ned Cranbourne was not without a heart; and accustomed to be treated with contempt, he was keenly sensible of kindness.

Mr. Dillon had laughed more than any one at his misfortune, though ignorant of what had led to it, and little dreaming of the consequences which might ensue from an accident apparently so simple.

"I am delighted to have afforded you all so

much amusement," said Ned, when, with Emma's assistance he again stood erect, his clothes besmeared with cream, and eggs, and butter, and sweetmeats. "It is very funny, no doubt, to see a man get a tumble, but not so agreeable to execute it. I fancy I must look like a map of the world, all red, yellow, and blue; so if you will allow me to pass I will go and change my dress with all speed, having broken no bones, and being exceedingly flattered and obliged by your kind inquiries."

So saying, Ned hurried from the room.

"The little fool is offended," said Dillon to the Baronet, with a sarcastic smile. "It is amusing to see a cock-sparrow in a passion."

"We have all been somewhat rude," replied Sir Charles, his wonted politeness and good-nature having made him quickly forget his anger at being interrupted in his conversation with Lorry at so critical a moment.

"Oh, he is used to being laughed at," said Dillon. "Give him a good dinner, and the sun will not go down upon his wrath."

Sir Charles always gave good dinners, and as his morning consultation with his housekeeper was his first business on leaving the breakfast-table, he now looked at his watch, and after casting an uneasy glance at Lorry, who was stepping from the window into the garden with Lieutenant Blake, he hurried away to his study. Whatever might be his pursuits there, his housekeeper was seen to leave it about half-an-hour afterwards, while she informed the butler that she feared her master was deranged, for he had talked about a roast plum-pudding with mushroom sauce.

The Baronet was in truth in a high state of excitement, and never capable of doing two things at a time, his faculties were too much bewildered to order dinner whilst he was thinking of making a fair lady an offer. The feeling that it was already half-done, and half accepted, and yet that the business was to begin again, annoyed him much, particularly when he heard Lorry in a desperate flirtation with some other man, whilst the housekeeper plagued him about

second courses. Telling her to hold her tongue, and do her duty, without tormenting him, he had sunk back in an easy chair as soon as she left the room, totally forgetting that he had ordered no dinner at all.

The first thought which consoled him was that when Lorry was his wife she would take duties so unworthy of his dignity off his hands. Then he heard the sound of her voice beneath his window, and the pangs of jealousy again distracted his heart. Starting up, he determined to go at once to ascertain what subject could possibly afford her and Lieutenant Blake so much amusement during his absence.

Before he could reach the door, some one knocked sharply, and then Mr. Dillon entered.

Sir Charles was annoyed, and Dillon expected him to be so, but he knew that his politeness would prevent his expressing it, and he said carelessly, that he hoped he did not intrude at an unreasonable moment, as he wished to ask the Baronet's valuable advice on a subject which gave him some anxiety.

Sir Charles was uneasy, for his head was so occupied at that moment, by his own affairs, that he had no desire to hear anything about other people's. But he was never deaf to well timed flattery, and Dillon knew, how quickly to excite his attention.

"My sister is quite impatient for you to play the game of billiards you promised to indulge her with," he said, after they were both seated.

"Where is she?" inquired the old man, half turning towards the door.

"I told her, I might detain you for at least half an hour," replied the lawyer, "so she is gone down the shrubbery with Lieutenant Blake."

"I heard them talking on the terrace," said Sir Charles, with an uncomfortable look,

"Yes," said Dillon, "the officers followed her there; but she detests such society, for you are no doubt well aware, that since she was so heartlessly jilted by your unfortunate son, she has decided never to marry."

"Never to marry!" echoed the Baronet, becoming very pale. "You talked of a city merchant, whom you said she encouraged!"

"Yes, we thought, at one time, she might have got over her disappointment, but I find she refused the fellow, as she had done others."

"But she is so gay—so charming, so lively!" rejoined the old man.

"She is at her ease, because she has no object to gain in men's society," replied Dillon.

"But she is perfectly fascinating," murmured Sir Charles.

"No doubt to you she is so," said the wily lawyer, "for she has never conquered her unfortunate attachment to your son, and adores you as the father of the man, whom she considered almost as her husband."

"A husband, Mr. Dillon!" exclaimed the Baronet; "I never knew that there was even a positive engagement between them."

"It was kept profoundly secret," was the subtle reply. "But the affair went very far! heaven knows *how* far, for Lorry never willingly

spoke of it even to me, her own brother; but it nearly killed her, when Saville married Miss Ashley."

"You distress me beyond measure," said Sir Charles, rising from his chair, and walking in great agitation up and down the room.

"I grieve to do so," said Dillon, "it is quite unintentional, but I was anxious you should clearly understand the state of my poor sister's heart, in case of any forward fellows, who surround her here, misunderstanding her careless manner, should presume to say she had given them encouragement. It would be an entire mistake."

"I perfectly agree with you," said Sir Charles. "I have myself invariably found her, most charming, fascinating,—a hem; but I confess I never saw her give any encouragement to any one else; except, perhaps, to that solemn fellow Vaughan."

"Ah, my dear sir! exactly like your usual penetration. You have observed it, have you?"

"Certainly, I have observed it!" returned

the Baronet pompously. "But I confess I was at a loss to account for it, when more worthy objects of attraction were near."

"No wonder," said Dillon. "Vaughan is a cunning fellow; he paid his addresses to my sister before your son had gained her heart, and now, to win her favour, he talks to her for hours together of nothing but that unfortunate young man."

"Mr. Dillon I thank you. You have said enough; this is a very painful subject," returned the Baronet, resuming his seat and endeavouring to appear composed. "A very painful subject! my son's name has never been mentioned in my presence since the announcement of his death. For the honour of my family I have endeavoured to forget him; he has given me pain in many ways, and now, when he has been dead several years, it is hard, that he should disturb my happiness again; but he was born to afflict me."

"I grieve to have recalled the painful memory of one so worthless and unprincipled," murmured the lawyer.

“Sir, he was my beloved, my only son, not another word against him,” cried Sir Charles, in an agitated voice, “I can permit no one in my presence to accuse him of faults, which I have pardoned long ago. His body is in the grave, and I trust that his soul is in heaven, where I hope we may one day be reunited, and that both his faults and mine may be forgiven.”

Dillon saw with astonishment that tears filled the old man's eyes, as he uttered the last words. All his vanity and folly and family pride were forgotten in a father's sorrow for his only child. For this the lawyer was not prepared; he had believed that the Baronet, who had judged with severity the faults of his son when alive, had hardened his heart against him after death, as a disgrace to his family, and utterly without feeling himself, he had never suspected the secret sorrow and regret, which ever since the news of Saville's decease, had preyed on the Baronet's heart.

In spite of all his self esteem, remorse had often whispered in the darkness of the night and

the solitude of the day, that his lost son's first misdeeds had been a consequence of his own foolish indulgence, and the worst of his vices the result of his ill-judged severity.

"I think, Mr. Dillon, you intimated that you wished to ask my advice," said Sir Charles, after a short pause.

"It is a mere matter of business," was the reply, "perhaps we had better defer it to another time, as my sister is waiting for you."

"She will find some amusement till I come, without doubt," said the old man.

"Mr. Vaughan is expected this morning," was Dillon's only reply.

The Baronet grew red with anger, and again requested Dillon to explain his business.

"It is an unpleasant one," he answered, "but may I enquire, if, in the event of your dying without a will, Viscount Sedley is not your next heir?"

Sir Charles's eyes flashed fire! he hated the very name of his next heir. Had he been a vulgar man, he would have given utterance to a

coarse oath, but as it was, he only said, with prodigious dignity :

“ I have answered you that question before, Mr. Dillon; I do not intend to die without making a will. My property is not entailed beyond my son and my grandson, and I cannot understand what my next heir has to do with it, either during my life or after it.”

“ It appears, however, that his lordship does concern himself about it,” answered the lawyer, “ for he has sent to enquire of me, if there is any positive evidence of Captain Saville’s death. A friendly interest, no doubt.”

“ He had better have attended my poor boy’s funeral, to make sure that no one stood between him and my estates,” returned Sir Charles sarcastically.

“ He is no doubt a very interested man,” said Dillon.

“ I know him, sir; I have long know him. Pray proceed.”

“ I have heard that Viscount Sedley is paying his addresses to a rich city heiress, and that his

chance of success would be strengthened by the certainty of succeeding to your estates."

"Very possibly; but in answer to any further enquiries, you may tell them I am going to be married myself."

"Good heavens! you astonish me!" exclaimed Dillon "May I ask the name of the happy object of your choice?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," answered the old man, in some confusion. "And I will reply that only an hour ago I felt certain of success, certain of being accepted by your own charming sister; and though you have thrown out hints which are discouraging, I do not despair of securing her hand and her affections."

"My dear Sir Charles," said Dillon, in a tone of profound sorrow, "you surely cannot think of marrying a woman who was once engaged to your son, who may almost, in fact, be considered as your son's widow."

"His widow, sir! No, indeed, that would be a very different thing," answered the Baronet. "My family have always held a high place in

society; they have stood first in the class to which they belong, first in everything; and I know no man whose widow I would condescend to marry. Your sister is very attractive, and men have no doubt been drawn around her by her fascinating manners and her beauty; but she has positively assured me that her heart till recently had remained free."

"I rejoice to hear this," replied the lawyer, "for I have greatly feared the contrary; and it would be the proudest moment of my life to bestow my sister at the altar on a man like you, Sir Charles Saville, equally possessed of fortune, family, and all the amiable and distinguished qualities which can ensure the happiness of a wife."

"I confess I have thought that the match would give you satisfaction," said the old man, with a gratified smile.

"The highest pleasure," rejoined Dillon. "Neither Lorry, nor her nearest relatives, could have anticipated her having the extraordinary good fortune to be chosen by a man so far her

superior, not only in position, but in taste; a man in fact like yourself, who might make his choice amongst the daughters of the highest nobility in the kingdom."

"I know it," said the Baronet, meekly; "but though Miss Dillon is not rich, she is well born; she is in fact a branch of my own family, and there can be no degradation in marrying her, for strictly speaking she is well born."

"But if, as I understood you, sir, there has been as yet no positive engagement between my sister and yourself," resumed Dillon, looking steadily at the old man through his glittering spectacles, "and as I think there can be little doubt that Captain Saville was unfortunately killed in Flanders, and as you are unwilling that Viscount Sedley should inherit the Cleve estates—"

"Sir, he shall not have an acre of mine," cried the Baronet, with unwonted acrimony. "I can make a will, and I will make a will. Nothing but my intention to marry has so long delayed it."

“But, my dear sir,” resumed the lawyer, in accents which would have sounded disgustingly fawning to one less accustomed to subserviency than Sir Charles, “far be it from me to suppose that a life so valuable to us all is in any degree precarious—that is to say, more precarious than that of any other mortal being; but if you marry my sister, wedding dresses must be made, settlements must be made, furniture and equipages got ready for such an occasion, suitable to your position in society. I don’t mean on poor humble Lorry’s account, but on yours, Sir Charles. You owe much to yourself, which a humbler man might leave undone, and all this will require much time, probably months, and all that time you have no will. It would be very imprudent, and would prove a perpetual source of anxiety to you, from which you would be at once relieved by simply putting your name to a document which you can always alter afterwards at your pleasure.”

“You are right, very right,” said the Baronet.

“Then you authorize me to have such a document prepared?”

“Most certainly. Tell your partner to wait upon me to-morrow, and I may confide to you, that I intend to leave my niece, Miss Saville, the whole of the family estates and personal property, charged with certain legacies, and a handsome provision for your sister, who will be before then, I trust, my affianced bride. Of course you shall not be forgotten. And after my marriage, it is not impossible, that I may find reason to cancel the whole, in favour of a son and heir of my own. If my railway shares, and our last mining speculation succeed, as you anticipate, I shall be able to leave this young scion of my house a vast accession of wealth, and a fortune equal to maintain the honour of his name and rank. By heaven, when he comes of age, I will give such a fête at Cleve Court, as none of my ancestors have ever done.”

“I have no doubt of it,” replied Dillon, as he remembered an old proverb, which might have been very aptly applied. But he was not to be

turned aside, by any flights of Sir Charles's fancy. The will was the object for which he had come there, and the will he was determined to have made, though very different in tenor from the notes handed to him by the Baronet as a guide in drawing it up.

He was satisfied with only one part of the instructions, which was the appointment of himself as executor and residuary legatee. He clearly saw that nothing he had said about Lorry had produced any effect on the Baronet's mind, yet he was still determined to prevent the marriage, that he might secure the inheritance for himself, by a marriage with Emma Saville, or some other means.

He knew that nothing but this, or a flight to America, could save him from the gallows, in the event of Sir Charles Saville's death, which he considered, a much more probable event than he affected to believe it. It would be at once clear that he had been guilty of enormous peculations, if the papers of the Baronet were ever closely investigated by a disinterested man of business.

When he had first entered on the management of his cousin's property with a handsome salary, as an honourable provision for a younger member of the family, the estates brought in clearly, twenty-two thousand a year, without a mortgage, or any other drawback. Dillon knew that day, when he received the instructions for the Baronet's will, that all the unentailed property was sold, and much, which the death of Captain Saville left at his father's disposal, was deeply mortgaged, although Sir Charles himself knew very little about it, and believed that all the money raised, had been employed with enormous profit. As he considered his rental twenty-two thousand a year, he thought himself justified in spending that sum annually, and Dillon had, hitherto, contrived in some way always to find him the money. This was one reason why he stood so high in the Baronet's favour, who praised him to everyone, as the most admirable agent in the country. Convinced of his perfect honesty and skill in business, he left him also the undisputed patronage which be-

longs to such a property. Of this Dillon made a lucrative traffic. He compelled the farmers to vote according to his pleasure, and he sold his interest to the government. The neighbouring seaport belonged almost entirely to Sir Charles Saville, and a neat little income Mr. Dillon contrived to make out of that little town, where, as in every larger town throughout the kingdom, everything that was done, was a job.

If the drains wanted cleaning, the filth was left to become putrid in the sun until somebody found it convenient to make a job of it. People drank the worst water from the worst well in the neighbourhood, because the supply of water was a job; the gas light was a job; the paving was a job; and the sanitary commission was the worst job of all; a new church had been built at a great expense, though all the people went to the meeting house, and when it was done, it looked like half a dozen gable ended barns, all jumbled together, and that was a job; and last of all, the new cemetery was a very bad job indeed, for the rector and the town council were

fighting about it, and not being able to settle whose job it should be, there was a great risk of the dead not being buried at all.

And Mr. Dillon put money into his pocket, by all these jobs, and said he was serving the public, and the most extraordinary thing was that the public believed him, and Sir Charles Saville believed that his agent was devoting his life to his interest, though the Baronet thought it was the lawyer's duty to do so, and his duty to reward his faithful services. He had therefore at one time thought of making him his heir, and had only given up the idea after being reconciled to Emma Saville.

Even after their morning's conversation in the library, when Sir Charles continued to muse on the will he was about to sign, he had some misgivings that such might be the best way to secure the honour of his family. Dillon, he thought, could change his name to Saville; in consequence of his parliamentary interest, he would be made a Baronet, perhaps a peer. Lord Saville—the title must be revived, and the old man,

when he arrived at this conclusion, was so elated by the prospect of his family honours, that he forgot that he must be dead and buried, before Mr. Dillon could arrive at such a dignity.

But the remembrance of the charming Lorry banished all such fancies, and he resolved to marry her, and have a son and heir of his own as soon as possible, so he set off in quest of her.

•

CHAPTER IX.

SIR CHARLES SAVILLE was standing on the garden terrace, in front of Cleve Court, gravely contemplating a stone escutcheon above the porch, displaying his family arms, and calculating how many hundred years they had been there, and how long they might retain their place, when a shower of roses fell suddenly upon him, and Lorry's merry laugh made him look hastily at an upper window from whence she had thrown them.

All his heraldry, as well as Dillon's advice, was forgotten in an instant. He had arrived at

an age, when recent conversations are speedily effaced from the memory, and Miss Dillon's power was omnipotent, for she governed him by means of his own vanity, which she kept in a constant state of excitement. He could no more forget her than he could forget himself, and she never left him in peace long enough to do either.

To an old man whose faculties had at no time been very bright, or in any proportion to his self esteem, and whose powers of enjoyment were enfeebled by age, and satiated by indulgence, Lorry Dillon was indeed a most charming creature. She seemed to inspire him with new life, by her versatile humours, by her flattery—her teasing—her coaxing—her contradiction, and her pretended admiration.

Whilst he was drooping under a sense of old age and rapid decay, she had suddenly made him perfectly contented with himself; and restored to him a faint shadow of the pleasures of his youth. He flirted with her, till he actually forgot that he was old, and whilst enlivened by her

vivacity, he ceased to lament the merry days of former years. The ghost of youth, which the arts of the coquette called up, was very faint and shadowy, but it sufficed to bewilder him, and excite him to make a fool of himself, and Lorry's encouragement at breakfast had disposed him that day, more than ever, to do so. He was fully determined to seize the first favourable opportunity to make her a formal offer of his hand. Her apparent frankness made him believe her sincere, and he fondly flattered himself that he was beloved.

He endeavoured to gather up the roses, which the laughing girl had cast at him, with the gallantry and agility of five-and-twenty, and though he soon found that his knees were too stiff to bend, even in such service, he playfully pulled others from the bushes near, and threw them at Lorry, in return.

She then sent back a flood of merry reproaches for his long absence, and challenged him to the game of billiards he appeared to have forgotten.

He protested that he had been suffering agonies, whilst detained by business, and was impatient to join her. There was a stone arched portal, terminating a path to a back staircase from a door adjoining the library, a few paces from the spot where Sir Charles was standing. It was a quaintly ornamented arch of the middle ages, the curves and carvings of which were partly concealed by the jasmine, which had hung around it for centuries. Sir Charles passed through it, and then proceeded along a narrow avenue, between thick evergreens, towards the private entrance to the house. It was a secluded nook, and afforded at that hour, the deepest and coolest shadow. Yet the bees frequented it, for the beds of mignonette, stocks, and heliotrope, filled the air with pleasant odours. Emma Saville loved to sit there with a book at noon, for the library was little frequented, and this passage from it rarely used.

There she was that morning, when Sir Charles Saville on turning an angle of the walk, stood suddenly before her. She was surprised, but he

not less so, by the group he so unexpectedly intruded on.

Emma sat on the stone steps, her large garden hat thrown aside, her black dress falling in graceful folds around her, as with one hand resting over her knees, she held up a book in the other to little Harry, who with his right arm thrown around her neck, was reading aloud.

Old Robin Charlton, under whose care the boy had been allowed to come from the Vicarage, was standing at a little distance leaning on his stick, with his weather beaten face turned towards them, trying to catch the words which were read by the little boy, so that he was not aware of the Baronet's approach, till he stood close beside him.

Little Harry suddenly ceased reading, and stared at the old gentleman, whilst Emma arose, and made many apologies, for being unintentionally in the Baronet's way.

"I fear I disturb you," said Sir Charles, with a slight bow, "but I was not aware that you had visitors this morning, nor that you had

any visitors, whom you preferred receiving out of my house, instead of in it."

"This is little Harry, my ward, sir," replied the girl mildly, without appearing to notice the sarcasm conveyed in the last words, though she felt it deeply.

"And is that Mr. Ashley's servant who has brought him here?" demanded her uncle, contemptuously, as he glanced at the Pedlar.

"No, sir, I am not the Vicar's servant," said Robin, taking off his hat; "but the Vicar knows and trusts me, for I was long a servant in your family, and Master Harry knows me."

Sir Charles gave the old man no answer, but after looking at his weather beaten figure, with a vague feeling that he had seen and heard his voice somewhere before, he for the first time cast his eyes upon the boy, who holding Emma's hand, stood close beside her.

No sooner had he clearly seen the sturdy, curly-headed little fellow, whose large dark eyes were fixed with curiosity upon himself, than his face flushed as red as crimson.

"Madam—Miss Saville," he cried in a tremulous voice, "where does that boy come from? Who was his father? How came he under your care? His likeness is most extraordinary to one—but tell me who he is?"

"Aye, sir, I've often thought it myself," cried Robin drily.

"Thought what, sirrah? how dare you to think? how can you presume to know what I mean?" demanded the Baronet, with great displeasure, as he cast a look of scorn at the Pedlar, who stood perfectly unmoved.

"Why I see the likeness, myself!" answered Robin, quietly, "so I know that you think Master Harry is the very image of your own dead son, Captain Saville."

"How dare such a fellow as you pretend to know anything about my family," demanded Sir Charles, perfectly enraged by such audacity.

"Oh, I knew the Captain from a boy," answered the pedlar. "I may venture to say I know something about all your family, Sir Charles, for I first set your son on a pony, when

he was less than that boy, who is as you say, his very image. I went with him to the army, though I was up in years, and I never left him till he was buried, as all know, in a foreign land."

"And is that child his?" demanded the Baronet, in a voice which was scarcely audible, and though he endeavoured to speak with indifference, he trembled so violently, that he was compelled to grasp the iron rails of the steps for support.

Emma was even more agitated than her uncle, when she heard this question, to which, she was not at liberty to reply with truth. Yet gladly would she have done so, and placed his grandson in Sir Charles's arms, had her promise to Saville not prevented her. She dreaded, therefore, lest the same question should be repeated to herself, when if she did not reply, her confusion might betray the secret.

But Robin quickly relieved her from this embarrassment, by his ready answer; "that can scarcely be so," he said, "for his father was an

Indian officer, who was killed by the natives, and he left his boy, to your brother, Major Saville and Miss Emma, to take care of."

"Ah, true! I think I have heard something of that before," replied the Baronet, with a deep sigh at this disappointment of a hope which had for a moment gleamed across his mind. "I remember, Miss Saville, you told me you had taken charge of a child, of whom your father had been guardian. It did not interest me at the time, and I forgot it, but I remember it now. It was very imprudent, very improper indeed, to burthen yourself in this way, when he left you without a sixpence. You must find it a great bore to be teaching him A B C, and that sort of thing."

"Aunt Emma does not teach me A B C. I can read very well, sir!" said the boy, now boldly stepping forward, and glowing with honest pride. "I do not give Aunt Emma any trouble, for I love her dearly, don't I, Aunt Emma?"

"Yes, my dear boy," said the girl fondly, as she laid her hands on his flaxen curls.

"This seems a very romantic attachment,

Madam," rejoined Sir Charles, with a haughty and scornful smile. "Were you a few years older, it might give rise to strange surmises; and as it is, allow me, as your guardian, to say that the less you make a display of it the better, and that as long as you remain an inmate of my house, this young gentleman is better at the Vicarage than here."

So saying, the old gentleman passed on, and entered the library, closing the door behind him.

The being he had most ardently desired for years to behold had stood before him, and he had turned away and rejected him. He had stood on the verge of a great secret, the discovery of which would have brought happiness to his vain and solitary life, and he had paused with a vague suspicion that his fate was then to be decided; but the hope was crushed by his own haughtiness, and Robin, who could have told him much, was silenced by the insolence of his pride. Thus Sir Charles, rejecting truth and honest worth with disdain, hastened to re-

join the elegant Miss Dillon, whose flattery and falsehood were his accustomed food.

It was a mistake which brought on him many hours of keen suffering and anxiety; but all of us have made mistakes, or will make them in life, unless invariably guided by pure and noble principles. For though an action may appear imprudent, may bring us to poverty, humiliation, and toil, it is not a mistake, which even in hours of suffering we ought to regret, if its impulse was without reproach or taint of evil. Its attendant blessings will one day reward the trials it may bring even upon earth.

"Does that cross old man live in that great house, aunty?" asked little Harry, as soon as the Baronet was out of hearing.

"Yes, my child," replied Emma.

"And do you live with him?"

"Yes, Harry."

"And does he scold that way every day?" inquired the boy quickly. "I won't go in there, and you must come back again, aunty. I want you very much. Grandpapa Ashley never scolds.

I wish you would come back to be happy with us."

"I would gladly do so, my child," replied Emma; "but I am afraid I must stay here a little longer first."

"Oh, yes, you must come," continued the child; "Mr. Vaughan wants you very much. I heard him tell grandpapa you could never be happy at Cleve; and this is Cleve, is it not? Come away, aunty, I don't like this place."

"Did Mr. Vaughan say I was to come back again?" inquired the girl, her eyes filling with tears as she kissed the child.

"Yes, he said so yesterday," answered Harry. "I heard him, though I was playing at ball. He said the people here did not suit you. Oh! I hate those people, if they are all like that cross old gentleman."

"Hush, Harry; he is my uncle, and he is master here."

"And are you his servant, aunty?"

"Not quite, my dear," was Emma's gentle reply, and tears filled her eyes, for she thought

that even servitude might be less painful to endure than tyrannical hospitality.

"Robin," she said at length, when leading little Harry by the hand, she passed slowly down the garden steps towards the woods, "you have known how irksome it is to live in the house of the proud, for you have served at Cleve."

And putting her handkerchief before her eyes, she wept bitterly as she glided on.

"Aye, aye, my dear young lady, and I could ill bear to be insulted then," he replied, coming close up to her. "But I am glad you can cry, for nothing eases a crushed heart like tears. You have your bit of pride too, poor child, and you cannot bear, any more than your father before you could, to have your heart trampled on."

"Surely he could not be so insolent to my father?" demanded Miss Saville.

"Not insolent, but disdainful like, as if every word he spoke was ridiculous," said the pedlar. "He meant to make him feel that a poor younger brother had no business to have an opinion at all."

"I thought it was only women who were treated with such contempt," returned the girl.

"It is the poor, whether man or woman," rejoined Robin; "I am used to it now, but your father was not, for he had been his mother's favourite, so Sir Charles and he quarrelled soon after their father's death, and the Major never came to this place again. He rejoiced to get away, and the sooner you leave the better, Miss Emma, for you'll get no good by eating at a rich man's table, if you are to pay for it by slavery, as the poor must always do. I have long preferred a cold potato by the hedge side, with whistling birds my only company, and the green grass and the butter cups for my carpet. I can get up and walk away when I am done, and bless God with a light heart, for He only has respect for the poor."

"But you know, Robin, I have been too tenderly bred to live by hedge sides," replied the girl; "and as my uncle tells me that my father has left me almost a beggar, I am indebted to his compassion for my daily bread."

"It is as great a lie as ever was told!" cried the old man indignantly. "He has heard that from Mr. Dillon, no doubt. I knew how it would be if that fellow was the Major's trustee. It is a wonder to me that he was so long cheated by that rascal's smooth face."

"But you told him the truth, Robin," said Emma softly, whilst tears filled her eyes.

"May be I did the last time we met," rejoined the pedlar, "but it would have been better, no doubt, had I got to him a little sooner, but I never heard of his return to England, till the poor Major was nearly at the last gasp; but it was too late then to have the will changed, and now they say he left you a beggar?"

"Very nearly so," answered the girl.

"And that old fool, the Baronet, told you this himself?" inquired Robin.

"Yes, soon after I came to Cleve."

"Then, my dear young lady, it is very clear that he is Dillon's dupe, and you have no help to expect from him."

"He has invited me to reside in his house,

and has promised me an allowance of a hundred a year," said the girl.

"And you like that?" demanded the old man, looking keenly at her downcast face. "You trust to such promises?"

"I neither like the prospect of such dependence, nor do I trust to its continuance," was the reply.

"Ah, there you are right!" cried Robin with a laugh. "If you once contradict him there is an end of his favour, and though the Baronet may be his own master to-day, he may not be so to-morrow; and I don't think the new Lady Saville, that is to be, will like his relations about the house. If I might give you a word of advice, I would tell you to get away from the whole clan before the wedding day."

"I will, if I can," replied Emma, "for it is plain there will be no room for me then."

"Aye, and my dear, you must look sharp after your money, and that quickly. You have been taking care of your cousin's child, and grieving for your cousin's misfortunes, but it is

time you should think of yourself, for I fear Dillon means to rob you of your fortune, and it will be a hard job to hinder him."

"I am now on my way to consult Mr. Ashley on the subject," returned Emma.

"The Vicar is not a man of business," was the Pedlar's reply; "but there is another gentleman who could give you wise advice, for he knows Dillon well; and I think you and he were very good friends, for I mean Mr. Vaughan."

The blood mounted to Emma's temples at this unexpected mention of the surgeon's name.

"Perhaps Mr. Vaughan would not like to be troubled," she murmured; "especially with my concerns."

"What, Miss Emma; has anything happened between you?" inquired the old man. "Not troubled about you; why, I thought just the contrary, that it was the very thing he would have liked best."

"He thinks my conduct improper, I believe, with regard to my cousin," returned the girl; "he has seen him coming from my house at

midnight, and I am not at liberty to give him explanations."

"Well, you know, I was afraid he might be jealous," said the Pedlar, with a short cough. "Oh dear, dear; what trouble men make for themselves. He is jealous, poor man, and you think he is angry, my dear. But never mind, all that will come right before long, so keep up your heart, and you and Mr. Vaughan will be a match for all the rascally tricks of Mr. Dillon. The whole truth must soon be told; I hate secrets. Half the mischief in the world comes from secrets. They are very like lies, and beget a large progeny of them, and the brood is evil. I am sorry that you gave your word, even to Captain Saville, to keep his secret; but don't tremble that way, my dear young lady, you have done nothing to be ashamed of. Master Harry is at the Vicarage gate already, and surely, that is Mr. Vaughan who is shaking hands with him in the garden."

It was in truth the surgeon, and at that moment looked up in the direction to which little

Harry pointed, as he told him that his aunt Emma was coming home again.

The first impulse of Mr. Vaughan was to retreat into the house, but the next moment, when his eyes rested on the figure, the remembrance of which haunted him by night and by day, he remained as if rooted to the spot, eagerly watching Emma's approach, whilst Harry ran off to seek Mr. Ashley, and shouted and clapped his hands, till the sound of his mirth aroused the Vicar from his studies.

Robin saw at a glance, that although there was a misunderstanding between the young people, they did not love one another the less for that; and with his usual sagacity, he turned away into a back path leading to the kitchen, without his departure being observed by either. Emma's heart beat fast, but she did not lose her presence of mind. She saw that she could not enter the house without passing close to Vaughan. Robin's charge of jealousy had considerably softened her resentment against him, but still she could make no overtures of reconciliation, as

she could make no disclosures; but still she did not wish to appear desirous of avoiding him.

All this was rapidly thought and felt with the keenest anguish, but still she walked on without looking up, though she felt that Vaughan was eagerly watching her.

He hoped that she would give him some slight sign of forgiveness, for he had already learnt enough from different sources to feel, that in all probability he had most unjustly suspected her.

"If she is innocent she must tell me so," he had thought repeatedly, since their parting at the cottage door.

He thought it again in the Vicar's garden; proud man that he was, expecting the first sign of submission from her, and ready, if she had given it, to have bowed himself to the dust to win her forgiveness.

But Emma gave no sign. She, too, was proud. How much happiness has been cast away by such self-consciousness, and when the moment for reconciliation has passed by, how many have

bitterly repented the indulgence of a feeling, which bears only bitter fruit.

With the coldest and most formal salutations, this couple, who were in their hearts lovers, met like sullen enemies, and each endured a similar anguish as they approached on the narrow walk till they almost touched.

It was more than Vaughan could endure. Suddenly he held out his hand to Emma, and pronounced her name in a low and agitated voice.

She frankly gave him her hand, and he took it in silence, but with extreme delight. The approach of Mr. Ashley, with little Harry, prevented all explanation.

"We must meet again," murmured Vaughan, and dropping Emma's hand, he hurried from the garden.

His feelings were too excited for him to conceal them in the presence of the Vicar, and anxious to indulge the rapid current of his thoughts, he turned down the solitary lane, which led to the woods above the river.

CHAPTER X.

MR. ASHLEY gave Miss Saville a most cordial welcome. He had seen her rarely since her removal to Cleve, and he was as anxious as herself as to the restoration of Captain Saville to his father's favour, and the progress of Dillon's intrigues.

After they entered the house, Emma sat down on a low seat in his study, and little Harry nestled beside her; his flaxen curls, falling against her shoulder as he pressed his little arms around her.

The old man seemed to see the daughter, and the young mother restored to him who had been long beneath the turf of the green churchyard. Emma had indeed been a fond mother to the little boy, whom he now knew to be his grandson, and he loved her as his own child.

He listened, therefore, with deep interest to her narrative of all that was going on at Cleve, and of the change for the better in Saville's humour. She told him of the disappearance of her inheritance, and concluded by asking his advice, as to the steps necessary to be taken for its recovery.

"Dillon has not only robbed you, but Sir Charles," answered Mr. Ashley; "one of the largest of his estates has been two years for sale, but no title can be made to this entailed property as long as the death of Captain Saville's child remains unproved. This delay enrages Dillon, who is anxious to get hold of the purchase money, and who appears to have considered that the death of Saville gave sufficient right to sell."

"Now you can produce the boy, there must be an end to all such bargains," cried Emma, eagerly.

"It will be difficult to prove his identity, unless Captain Saville will swear to his son," replied the Vicar, "but he must consent to expose the crimes of Dillon when his outlawry is reversed, which, with the assistance of a friend, though without his knowledge, I am now endeavouring to bring about."

"Heaven will reward you," said the girl.

"It is my duty, for that boy's sake," answered the Vicar; "even though a great sacrifice may be necessary, to arrange his debts."

"If I had had my fortune, you might have taken it all," said Emma, eagerly.

"I hope, my dear young lady, you may recover your fortune, by the exposure of Dillon's villany in other matters, and that all the family feuds, which he has fermented, may ere long be put an end to; but all this must be done, before affairs are further complicated, by Sir Charles's marriage with Lorry Dillon."

Though Miss Saville and the Vicar arrived at no very decided conclusion how all this was to be effected, yet they were both made happier by this interview. Such peaceful and affectionate communion revives the heart, like the pure fresh air of a spring morning, for the old man could yet sympathise with the feelings of youth, and though he prudently chided Emma when she talked of leaving Cleve Court at once, he was not insensible to her desire to escape from the idle vanity and heartless intrigues which she witnessed there.

“You are proud yourself, Emma,” he added, “and you are mortified by your position in that great house.”

“Impertinence from such as Lorry Dillon, I confess is hard to bear with indifference,” said the girl, with a heightened colour and flashing eyes, which sufficiently justified the accusation brought by Mr. Ashley against her.

“To me it appears scarcely worth your contempt,” answered the Vicar, with a smile. “But I was proud at your age, and knew the mortifi-

cation of eating at other men's tables. When I was tutor in a nobleman's family, nobody meant to insult me, but all showed that they thought me of an inferior race. Yet I endured it, Emma; for a University education had made me dependent on the great for my subsistence. Not a night did I retire to rest that I did not ask myself with a swelling heart--what were these men better than I, who came and went at the house of my patron, and treated me, a gentleman by birth, by habit, and by education, as a wretch beneath their notice. I fell into strange discontent with the society which authorized such distinctions; above all, when being presented to the Bishop of the diocese, he did not return my salutation at our next meeting. But one day the riddle was explained to me. I received wages. I was a hired servant of those whose children I was not thought unworthy to instruct. This was my sin and my degradation. Men who received thousands as the wages of corruption and idleness, were honoured and caressed, but my wages, though honourably won,

were less than those of my lord's cook, and I was rated accordingly."

"Is it possible that men can be so unjust?" asked Emma tenderly.

"My dear child, you have suffered from as great injustice in your short life," said the Vicar, "and I hope you will turn it to as good account as I did, for no sooner did I understand wherefore I was slighted, than I cared no more about it. The fine society, which at first had dazzled me, lost all its value in my eyes, as soon as I learnt that the men who composed it looked at the world from a point of view so remote from mine that I could have no more sympathy with them than they had with me. From that time, Emma, I was happy, for I was independent of worldly opinion, and sought only the approval of heaven and my own conscience. Try to do the same and remain at Cleve, for there are duties there for you to perform for others as well as yourself. For little Harry's sake, you must remain."

"I fear I can serve him little," returned the girl, shaking her head.

"Pure and upright as you are," said the Vicar, "your influence must be felt in such a household, and it may be in your power by honest means to save your uncle from the snares which are spread around him."

"But should he marry Miss Dillon, I cannot possibly remain," replied Emma firmly.

"Nor should I desire it," said Mr. Ashley, "for no doubt her first act of authority would be to turn you out of the house. No, Emma, I respect your real dignity as much as you can desire, but even their engagement is not yet announced, and however madly Sir Charles Saville may be in love, it is possible that much may happen before long to prevent such a match."

To this reasoning Emma offered no opposition, and as the afternoon was already far advanced, she accepted Mr. Ashley's offer to accompany her with little Harry, on her road towards Cleve Court. As they passed over the meadows, though the day was then clouded and dull, the calm grey light was in harmony with the peaceful scene. No rustling was to be heard

in the hedges, for not a breath of air was stirring, only from time to time, a dead leaf fell suddenly as a man who had survived his age, drops at length noiselessly into the grave. Nothing was to be heard, but that sweet hum and harmony of summer, which speaks of warmth and peace, and joy. Even the spirit of little Harry seemed hushed by the universal stillness, and Emma forgot her many causes for anxiety as the Vicar spoke to her of the blessed influences of nature upon an innocent heart; of those, to whom the beautiful forms of creation are but types of the eternal wisdom and love which pervade and animate the whole.

Suddenly as they were passing across the summit of a furze covered common, they heard the sound of voices at a considerable distance beneath them. A clump of bushes, all covered with blossom, obstructed their view of the speakers for a short time; but after advancing about a hundred paces, they saw through an opening in the broken ground, that two men were sitting on the grass, whilst Robin Charlton, leaning on his stick,

was listening with profound attention to the words of one of them, who was talking earnestly and rapidly, though in a low voice.

It was Captain Saville whom he addressed, and as both Emma and the Vicar felt that the conference was intended to be secret, they hurried on in silence till entering a neighbouring copse, they were completely concealed.

"Surely that was Mr. Cranbourne who sat beside Captain Saville," were the first words Emma uttered.

"I have no doubt of it," answered the Vicar. "I should like to see your cousin in better company, for that meddling fellow is always making mischief."

"He hates the Dillons," answered the girl, "and will assist in any plan against them, though he appears to submit tamely to their insolence."

"Appears!" echoed Mr. Ashley with a smile. "If we would know the world truly, and not be its dupes, we should always look under appearances. The toad within the stone is not more different from the surface which conceals it, than

are men and women, from the shams and seemings which encompass them. What would the clever Dillons say, if they knew that the cringing little sycophant they insult, is in possession of a secret, which, if disclosed, would be their ruin, and who perhaps, whilst he smiled at their last impertinence, was thinking of a certain letter he purloined from my study, which he had only to show in order to upset their whole schemes."

"Is it possible he could commit such an act?" demanded Emma with amazement.

"I have every reason to think so," rejoined Mr. Ashley. "It was a letter from Saville, demanding his boy, and I have not seen it since I left Mr. Cranbourne alone in my library."

"Oh, I am weary of all these secrets, and deceptions, and intrigues," said Emma, in a sad tone. "Would it not be a thousand times better for Saville to go at once to his father, and claim his forgiveness and affection?"

"Ah, my dear young lady," answered the Vicar, "I think as you do, that truth and frankness are the best pioneers in life, but when they

have been long deserted it is difficult to bring them suddenly back into our service. Saville is still an outlaw. His father cast him off in anger, on account of his wild life, when he considered that his son's conduct brought dishonour on the name of which he is so proud; though I have reason to believe that he is innocent of much which Dillon then laid to his charge, yet his innocence must first be proved, before he can either hope for the Baronet's forgiveness, or show himself openly in his native land."

"But can such men as Cranbourne and Robin Charlton be of any essential service to him, under circumstances of so much difficulty?" asked the girl, anxiously.

"Robin was once his servant," was the reply. "He knows much, and though uneducated, he has a clear strong intellect, and is a remarkable man, considering the class to which he belongs. Ned Cranbourne may be like the mouse in the fable, and we will not despise his tiny efforts, if they are well meant, and directed by wiser heads than his own."

are men and women, from the shavings which encompass them. Y clever Dillons say, if they knew ing little sycophant they inst of a secret, which, if disclosed ruin, and who perhaps, with last impertinence, was that he purloined from my father to show in order to un-

“Is it possible he is a man if demanded Emma v. . . , instead of

“I have ever . . . which have brought Mr. Ashley. . . . him; but I have demanding his . . . fancies. He belongs I left Mr. Cr . . . class, and has a place in

“Oh, I . . . would be unjust to rob him; deceptions . . . take his chance, and we can sad tone . . . at he may perform his duties better better . . . has hitherto done.”

and closing this discourse, little Harry had been

“ . . . on before his companions, making a huge Vic . . . of every wild flower within his reach, n . . . his hands could no longer grasp the burthen

"Had you not better speak with Captain Saville yourself?" inquired Emma.

"I have determined to do so," was the Vicar's reply. "I had at first some hesitation how to act; during many years I have been more accustomed to read and think, than to bear a part in the affairs of men, but as little Harry's grandfather, I feel it my duty to do all in my power to establish his rights. I may have my doubts whether he would not be a happier man if brought up to earn his own bread, instead of inheriting a title and estates, which have brought little happiness to those before him; but I have no right to indulge in such fancies. He belongs by birth to a certain class, and has a place in society, of which it would be unjust to rob him; he must therefore take his chance, and we can only trust that he may perform his duties better than his father has hitherto done."

During this discourse, little Harry had been running on before his companions, making a huge nosegay of every wild flower within his reach, till his hands could no longer grasp the burthen

his arms could scarcely carry. When Emma looked around for him, he was high up a rocky bank, pulling at a pendant honeysuckle; but no sooner did he hear her voice calling his name, than down he sprang into the path and came running towards her.

“Kiss me, my child,” she said, “you must go back with Mr. Ashley.”

In a moment he flung his burthen of flowers to the ground, and his arms were clasped around her neck. The nosegay, which had cost him so much trouble to collect, was no more thought of, and Mr. Ashley smiled sadly as he saw him tread the blossoms in the dust, for he beheld in the fickleness of the boy the vanity of all human pursuits. Nor did the Vicar fail to remark, that after they parted and were pursuing their way by different paths, though the boy turned often and kissed his little hand in token of farewell to Miss Saville, he never once glanced at his scattered nosegay. Can it be in youth as in age, he thought, that human affection makes the only enduring impression on the heart?

CHAPTER XI.

LORRY DILLON was much provoked by Sir Charles's long delay, in keeping his appointment that morning in the billiard room. She always bore disappointment or delay with impatience. Her anger knew no bounds, when she heard him talking to Emma beneath her window, for though she bore him no love, she could brook no rival to divide his attention. She considered that if she deigned to encourage him, she had a right to his submission and adoration.

Determined to show him that she would not unsought be won, she at last left the billiard

room, and went off in a violent rage, to see if there was no one to be found to flirt with, in the drawing room.

But the visitors had all departed, and there to her annoyance sat her mother with her worsted work thrown aside talking in a tone of anger to her son.

Dillon was on a chair opposite to her, as calm and smiling as usual, with his legs crossed in a very careless attitude. His eyes were fixed on the ground, yet he more than once adjusted his spectacles during Mrs. Dillon's long harangue, which instead of provoking, seemed only to amuse him. Anxious to get Lorry out of the Baronet's way, he had ventured that morning to hint to his mother the propriety of her and her daughter's visit to Cleve being brought to a close. At this the old lady, whose head was still full of the idea of securing the Baronet for herself, had suddenly become exceedingly wrath, and was inveighing vehemently at his want of consideration for her feelings in making such a proposition, when Lorry entered the room.

Her appearance was most unwelcome to both of the disputants; the mother, beginning to suspect her daughter's schemes, and jealous of her increasing favour with Sir Charles, would have been as glad as Dillon himself to get her away from Cleve, could she have remained after her departure; and the son, unwilling to make an enemy of his sister, was afraid that she might discover his present efforts to disappoint her ambition.

Lorry was in too bad a humour to desire the society of either of her relatives, for they were the only persons who told her unpleasant truths, and whom she never sought to please. Her mother she heartily despised, and her brother was the only person whom she feared. His coolness, as well as his superior intellect, gave him great power over her. There had been passages in her life when she had shuddered with dread beneath his smile, and that morning there was a meaning in his eyes, as he glanced towards her, which she neither understood nor liked. With an air of haughty indifference,

however, she passed on in silence to a window at the end of the room, and seated herself at her writing table, which always stood there, as if unconscious that any one was present except herself. She then unlocked her desk, and pulling out one of its secret drawers, began to amuse herself by reading over a flattering letter she had recently received from her ardent admirer, Lieutenant Blake, whose glowing language had already afforded her much amusement.

She rather wished that Sir Charles should surprise her whilst thus occupied.

Not a word more was uttered by Mrs. Dillon and her son, and the latter got up and sauntered about the room, feeling very much as a man may do who, having administered poison to various individuals, is awaiting its results.

Lorry had not read more than half her letter, when Sir Charles entered by an inner door.

"Ah, Miss Dillon!" he exclaimed, advancing quickly towards her, and taking a chair at her side, "I scarcely know how to expect pardon for

my breach of faith this morning. But business, business—that torment of man's existence! business you know is imperative; but I will make no excuses, but rely entirely on your indulgence for forgiveness."

The lady drew herself up, and Sir Charles thought she looked prodigiously handsome, though the expression of her countenance was decidedly neither indulgent nor forgiving. He would have resented such a reception of his compliments by any one else, but, poor old man, he was in love with this saucy charmer, and though he thought all her caprices becoming, her countenance was so exceedingly black that he felt rather alarmed.

Had they been alone he could have said much to soften her displeasure, and he flattered himself that certain words from his lips would speedily have appeased any little jealous feeling which might have disturbed her temper, but Dillon and his mother were in the room, and their presence made his position awkward.

"You cannot suppose I had forgotten you,"

he murmured, in a low voice. "You know my devotion is too sincere for me to slight your smallest wish. I hurried to you as soon—"

"As soon as you had no one else to amuse you, I suppose you mean," answered the saucy girl, in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the room, and without deigning to raise her eyes from the letter she pretended to peruse.

Her mother observed this impertinence with amazement, for she being a sweet woman, had only the art to attract by smiles and flattery; but Dillon did justice to his sister's skill in the science of coquetry, whilst he yet exulted at the idea of soon rendering useless all her art.

To Mrs. Dillon's amazement, the Baronet was not the least offended with Lorry, but seemed only anxious to soften her displeasure, by assuring her "that her society alone had any attractions for him." He then glanced at her relatives, as if he wished them both a hundred miles off; but they were determined to remain, not only to hear what passed, but to prevent a matrimonial declaration.

So the Baronet, not wishing to have witnesses to the tender secret he was longing to impart, asked Lorry to accompany him to the flower-garden. She pouted, and still bending over her letter, pretended not to understand him, in order that she might be intreated to comply. Sir Charles began to lose patience.

"I know not what that letter you are so intent on perusing contains," he said, "but if it is more interesting to you than my conversation, you have only to tell me so, and I will leave you at liberty to enjoy it without further interruption."

"Oh, yes, it is charming," she replied, looking up with a gay smile at her ancient admirer; "if you would only pay me half the compliments it contains, I should think you the most delightful person in the world."

"The writer is clearly a man of taste," said the Baronet, in a tone of pique. "May I ask who has had the happiness to merit your praise?"

"Oh, Sir Charles," cried Lorry, "I am in duty bound to keep his name a secret."

"Even from me?" demanded the Baronet.

"Perhaps," she replied, with a smile, which dispersed every shade of ill-humour from the old man's countenance.

"Concealment would be of no avail," he returned, "for I recognize the hand-writing."

"Oh, how wickedly clever you are," she exclaimed. "I must put it out of your way, or you will read it through the cover, like a somnambulist," and laying it on a small writing box, she pretended to cover it over with her fair and jeweled fingers.

"You will allow me to read it without the envelope, I have no doubt," said Sir Charles, softly taking her hand to remove it.

Lorry pretended to resist, though she meant him to have it all the time, when she thought she had sufficiently piqued his curiosity.

In the playful struggle which ensued, the box on which her hand had rested came to the ground and the lid flying open, its contents were scattered on the carpet. A miniature portrait in a round setting of gold, rolled away to some

distance, but not before the Baronet had seen that it was the likeness of a young gentleman.

Miss Dillon gave a short cry of dismay, and holding back the old man, who was endeavouring to get at it, she sprang past him towards the corner where it lay.

But her brother was before her, and with one of his most sarcastic smiles, he took up the miniature, and though Lorry with frantic energy endeavoured to get it from him, he held it far above her reach, and passed it over her head to Sir Charles Saville.

"Clement! Clement! how can you be so cruel!" she exclaimed; and in a paroxysm of rage and disappointment she hid her face, and began to weep violently.

The eyes of the Baronet no sooner rested on the miniature than he too uttered a cry of dismay. It was the portrait of his own son.

"This proves, I think, most fully the truth of what I told you the other day," said Dillon, like a serpent, hissing into the old man's ear.

"This is all my brother's fault," exclaimed

Lorry passionately, though she had not heard these words, nor could she have understood their import had she done so. "I knew the unexpected sight of the picture must give you pain, which I would gladly have averted."

"Miss Dillon, is this true?" demanded the Baronet, in an agitated voice.

"What other motive could I have for refusing to show it to you?" she replied, sobbing. "Your own dear wife knew that your son and I had been playfellows, and gave me that portrait on her death-bed, on condition that I never showed it to you. She could not burn it, she said, and she was afraid that perhaps you might do so if you found it amongst her papers."

"Perhaps I might have committed such a folly then," returned Sir Charles, whilst he still continued to gaze earnestly on the portrait of the son, from whom he had parted in anger long years before.

Death had softened this feeling, for though passionate and dictatorial, the Baronet was not

a hard or inexorable man, and when his son's decease had left him alone, and he felt old age advancing upon him, his thoughts often wandered back to the handsome youth who had been the pride of his early married life, and who had been ruined by his vain indulgence. Conscience had then whispered that after having spoilt him, from the cradle upwards, he had dealt too harshly with him in his manhood.

Now, when he gazed upon his picture, the father forgot the faults of the son, whom he still fondly loved, and whom he often feared had been hurried to a premature grave by his own unreasonable severity. He believed every word which Lorry had told him, though the whole was the ready invention of her fertile brain; and his first feelings of jealousy being completely removed, the malicious insinuations of Dillon were rendered ineffectual.

Lorry still continued to weep with vexation, for she knew not how the affair might end, but when she was on the point of leaving the room, Sir Charles tenderly took her hand, and begged

a thousand pardons for the annoyance he had inadvertently occasioned her.

"I cannot now express my gratitude for the tender consideration you have shown for my feelings," he added, "but I hope soon to convince you of it."

Lorry sobbed aloud, without taking her handkerchief from her face, but this time her sobs were only affected, for she exulted in the conviction that she had won the day.

"My dear Miss Dillon, you must not give way to this violent grief," said the old man, softly pressing the hand he held.

"I am so distressed to have given you pain," murmured the wily coquette.


"It was involuntary on your part," replied Sir Charles; "I was surprised and shocked, I confess, but perhaps it is well that the accident occurred. I will keep the picture, and a time is perhaps not far distant when you and I must be very intimate, and shall have no secrets from each other; we may then talk much and frequently, of the unfortunate young man it repre-

sents. But let me see no more tears, my dear young lady. They painfully reproach me, and I trust they are the last I shall cause you to shed."

"You are too good—too kind," murmured the lady, with a soft smile. "You accuse yourself, in order to screen my folly, but I am a poor nervous creature, easily terrified and easily elated, so you must excuse me now; I must be alone for half-an-hour, to collect my scattered senses," she murmured as she pressed the Baronet's hand, and glided from the room. She was well aware he could make no declaration of his love in the presence of her mother and brother, whom she knew would never leave her alone with him, after such a scene.

Sir Charles, provoked at their pertinacity, quitted the room immediately after Lorry's departure.

He was no sooner gone, than Dillon threw down the book he had pretended to read, and said softly to his mother, "I think, my dear Madam, you must be now convinced that it is



time for you to give up all matrimonial speculations in that quarter."

"You are always needlessly impertinent," said the lady, with a sharp, angry glance, "and I am surprized to find how blind you are, in this case, to your own interest. Depend upon it, it would be more for your profit and advantage for me to have the disposal of the old fool and his money, than for Lorry to get hold of it."

"It is possible that I may prefer keeping both of them to myself," replied the lawyer, taking off his spectacles and coolly wiping the glasses, with a fine cambric handkerchief.

His face was peculiarly unpleasant, when thus divested of its usual covering. The eyes were protruding and dull, and the skin around them looked yellow and soft, as if long excluded from light and air. He knew this, and quickly replaced the crystal mask. He was Mrs. Dillon's favourite child; she loved him far more than Lorry, for she had no rivalry with a man, and was proud of his talents and manners; but even

she, the mother, was afraid of him at times. But she did not care for him then, and the vain old beauty was very indignant that he should interfere with her conquests, and laughed, a little laugh of defiance.

"Your mirth seems rather forced, madam," said her son, coolly, "and really I see little occasion for it, since you must admit you have played your cards very badly."

"I am not aware of having been engaged in any game," was the quick rejoinder, and Mrs. Dillon tried to overcome her rage, and look as sweet as usual.

"It is lost, so it is well you forget it," said her son. "My dear madam, you and I are very sensible people, and it is folly for us to dispute. I feel certain we have both the same object in view, therefore, let us come to a clear understanding on the subject. Lorry Dillon must not marry Sir Charles Saville."

"That is certain," replied the lady, "but I think she proved not five minutes ago, that she was more than a match for you."

"We shall see," returned Dillon. "What I propose is this. You must immediately form an excuse for returning home, and take her with you. Leave the rest to me."

"But I have no wish to leave this place," said his mother, with gentle obstinacy; and obstinacy, as Dillon well knew, is a remarkable characteristic of sweet women. "I find myself exceedingly comfortable here. I have everything I can desire! a good table—an excellent room—my own maid! No, you ask too much; I positively cannot voluntarily quit a place where I get such delicious cream to my coffee, and where the champagne is iced every day," and she settled herself amidst the cushions of her easy chair in a tranquil manner, which convinced her son that all further entreaty on the subject would be vain. He was well aware of the truth of what she had once told him, that his obstinacy must yield to hers, for he only had it at second hand.

"If I have lost the chance of becoming mistress of Cleve," she concluded, "you may at least,

let me enjoy its good things, as long as I can," and Dillon was fain to submit to the overwhelming influence of cream and champagne, and to allow Lorry to remain at Cleve Court, till he could devise some more successful way, of frustrating her matrimonial project.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Robin Charlton left Miss Saville in the Vicarage garden, he proceeded at a slower pace than usual, down the adjoining lane. He had a good deal of business on his hands that day, and yet before he had gone far, he seated himself on a stone by the way side, to wait for Vaughan, who he expected would shortly come down the same road.

Nor was it long till the surgeon made his appearance.

"I have been waiting for you, sir," said the pedlar, as the gentleman drew near, "for I want

to whisper a word in your ear, to prevent more mischief. It is time you should know that you are just breaking the poor young girl's heart, that you have left at the Vicarage, with your jealousies and your fancies."

Vaughan started and turned deadly pale, but made no reply.

"You are a clever man, no doubt," continued Robin, "but you don't understand all things, either in heaven, or on earth, and it is very clear, you don't understand a maiden's heart, or you would never suspect that innocent young thing of doing amiss."

"But, Robin, a man must believe what he sees," muttered the surgeon.

"You may believe what you please," returned the pedlar; "but I tell you, she is as innocent as the angels in heaven, only she won't betray her cousin's secrets to screen herself. So now you know the truth, and may do as you like. A good morning to you."

It was not in Vaughan's nature, to express the feelings which these words excited, and he

saw Robin walk away, without making any attempt to stop, or question him. He had already decided on the course he meant to pursue, and silently he took the road towards Cleve Court, where it was his first duty to attend his patient.

Robin, after he had spoken to the surgeon, walked rapidly on to Nanny's cottage at the Red Cliff.

The dumb girl was spinning as usual, but the poor woman lay sick in bed, where she was supported by pillows, covered with coarse, but clean linen. There was decency, even in her extreme poverty.

As soon as she saw the pedlar, she held out her thin long hand and grasped his. "I am going a long journey," she said in a feeble voice. "I am glad you are come, for it would be dreary to leave this world alone—alone to the last breath! Yet, since youth passed away, I have been very lonely in the world."

"Let us hope, your solitude has prepared you for the great change that is to come," murmured

the pedlar, in a solemn voice. "You shall not be alone, Nanny! We have known each other from babes, and the poor must stand by the bed of the poor, for we understand one another best, and we only know how the hope of eternity has borne us up, in sickness, and sorrow, and want. There is the blessed home, Nanny, where the poor shall weep no more, neither shall any man despise them."

"There we shall meet those we loved on earth without pride or gold placing a bar between us," said Nanny eagerly, and her eyes flashed, and her cheeks gleamed with the fire of an old passion, which even then was not extinct in her heart.

"Nanny, you must not have such thoughts," returned the pedlar softly.

"But I cannot forget that I lost all earthly joy when Major Saville was laid in the grave," murmured the sick woman. "There would be no joy in the resurrection, if the dead do not know their friends in heaven!"

Robin made no reply; he saw that her fever

ran high and that she uttered what she would not otherwise have betrayed. A few moments afterwards she appeared more composed.

"Robin, my man," she then said, "you must not mind all the nonsense I talk. I seem sometimes half in the other world already. But I remember now, what made me want to see you. I have known many secrets in my day. I dare say I have often done wrong, but I could never refuse to serve them that were kind to me. Love is a precious, a very precious thing, Robin, but oh, it brings endless sorrow."

"And you wanted to tell me that?" observed the old man drily.

"No, no, when he came from school," Nanny muttered quickly, "we went nutting together in the woods. Oh, how bright the sun shone then, on the hazel boughs. Over the rocks we went, and down by the stream—and then he left, and when he came back; we were man and woman grown, and he was handsome and grand, and cared no more for me than for the birds that sung upon the boughs, as we walked by. He

liked them as he did me, because they reminded him of pleasant days gone bye. But oh, Robin, though I knew that, though I knew that the curse of poverty was upon me, I was fool enough to love him still. But no one knew it; I only vowed in my heart to love him all my life, and I have done it. I served his brother for love of him; I nursed his nephew for love of him; and the boy I nursed was dear to me, for my love of the uncle, and yet that child brought me endless sorrow!"

"Yet surely, he never meant to do you ill," rejoined the pedlar.

"I know that, but he was scarcely ten years old, when he brought Dillon to my cottage. I had a niece lived with me then, an only sister's child!"

"She was a fair young girl," said Robin; "I remember her well, but I never knew her end."

"I did all I could to hide her shame," rejoined Nanny. "Most people thought she went away to be married, but Dillon had enticed her away

to London. The poor foolish thing liked fine clothes, and that was her ruin. When she came back to me, she had a child, that dumb girl," and she pointed to the spinner. "It is now five years ago, and she soon left me and went to service, without Dillon ever being able to discover her, though he sometimes offered me large rewards, and at other times threatened vengeance to induce me to disclose to him, where she was. She had carried off with her some important papers he kept at her lodgings for concealment. When I saw her on her death bed, she gave me these writings, which might frighten the villain, she said, to provide for her child. When I saw what they were, I set off to carry them to Major Saville, but I heard of his death when I had got only as far as Winside. Then I thought it better to wait till his daughter came of age. But I shall not live so long, and I must see her. Do you think you could get a message sent to her at Cleve?"

"Yes, that I will," answered the pedlar; "and she can come down here when all the fine

folks are playing cards this evening in the drawing-room. She has been once through the woods in the dark already; she has the brave, kind heart of a true soldier's daughter."

"But should I be dead before then?" said Nanny faintly.

"You won't die so soon," answered Robin simply. "I've seen many death beds, and though you are very nervous, you are not in immediate danger. But you want nourishment. If I had known you were so bad I would have brought a bottle of wine from the Vicarage."

"Mr. Vaughan has brought wine," returned the sick woman; "but I have not tasted it; it is in that cupboard," and she pointed to a rude closet in the corner of the kitchen.

A little bread and tea were all that it contained, and Nanny was without money to purchase more, yet she had refused a hundred pounds from Dillon only a week before, and had no wish on earth but to restore the papers he sought to purchase to their rightful owner, without fee or reward. Honesty is of no class,

neither can it be created by prosperity; it is impossible to instil it into some hearts, and in others no poverty can extinguish it.

Something of this kind passed through Robin's mind as he handed the sick woman a little wine in a tea cup.

"It has as much virtue as if it were in a chiseled glass," he said.

But Nanny thought not of cup nor glass, but of the pure liquid she swallowed.

It seemed to fill her veins with new life, and telling the pedlar that she would now try and sleep till he returned with Miss Saville, she again laid her head on her pillow.

"But you must first tell me where I shall find Captain Saville," he said. "I came here only to ask that, and we got talking of other things."

"The girl shall show you the way," she replied, and forthwith made signs, which Nell perfectly understood, and waving to Robin to follow her, quickly left the cottage with evident delight.

Overjoyed to escape to the fields and the fresh air, the poor girl bounded on before him, like a dog let loose from its chain. Little did she understand the sorrow which was hovering over the house, for of death she had no comprehension, and desolate and forsaken as she was soon likely to be, there was not a happier creature that day on the face of the earth than poor Nell.

They were still a quarter of a mile from Saville's hiding place, when, on crossing the common, Robin heard some one whistling behind a clump of furze. He stopped, and his eyes filled with tears as he listened, for it was a tune often played by Major Saville's regiment, and to which he had frequently marched. There is a wonderful magic in a simple air to recall the past, but these notes likewise convinced Robin of the proximity of Captain Saville, who also knew them well.

Turning aside a few paces, he found his young master, as he expected, lying on the grass in a nook between the bushes.

"Robin, my good fellow, how came you here?" was the careless salutation, as he partly raised himself on the unexpected appearance of the pedlar.

"You should not whistle the old march, sir, if you don't wish me to find you," answered the poor man, laughing.

"Ah, did I whistle it?" asked the Captain.
"But I am glad you are come, for I want to tell you I have got a new ally, who has told me a host of secrets."

"And who may that be, sir?" demanded the pedlar, with a quiet smile.

"A keen fellow, and one in the house too; the worthy Ned Cranbourne, who was here not half an hour ago, to make me a tender of his services, and to swear an eternal alliance, offensive and defensive, with me against the three harpies who have fastened their claws upon my father, and who daily threaten to deprive the said Cranbourne of all the good dinners at Cleve Court."

"The man talks too much," answered the

pedlar drily; "he is not to be trusted; and, moreover, his head is too weak to cope with such deep minded creatures as the Dillons."

"Oh, I assure you he has hit upon a most capital scheme," cried Saville eagerly. "It is quite original, quite his own, I assure you, though he wants my assistance to carry it out, which I am very ready to give."

"Would you just have the kindness to explain it. I think I know the ground pretty well, and shall be able to tell whether it is likely to do good or harm."

"Oh, it is a short story," returned the Captain. "It seems Ned knows our family history pretty well, or he would not have been up to the thing. But it is a capital joke, and if I had not been so beaten and battered about lately, if I had not been slandered by one rascal, and plundered by another, till my spirits seem totally benumbed, if I had no anxiety about my boy, and fifty other things, I should have enjoyed the joke amazingly; but I cannot be merry as I once was, with a load of care upon my shoulders,

and the consciousness of having increased my misfortunes by my own folly."

"Then why listen to the schemes of a silly body like Ned Cranbourne?" asked the old man, with a sad misgiving that Saville would snatch as eagerly as ever at any plan which promised amusement, in spite of all his resolutions to be prudent. "But speak out, sir, that always prevents confusion."

"I cannot tell you till Ned comes back again," said the Captain. "But he will soon be here, for he is only gone for pen, ink, and paper for me to write a letter."

"This is a queer place to be penning epistles," said Robin.

"Where better than in sight of the domains of my ancestors?" answered the Captain, whose cheek flushed as he gazed over the fair fields and broad woods of his paternal estate, which stretched far to the west, from the confines of the heath where they were seated; "where better than in sight of the broad lands which my letter may assure to my son, though I may never enjoy them."

"And who are you going to address?" asked the pedlar, on whom Captain Saville's high flown language, in his present excited spirits, produced not the least effect.

"To a lady—to a very fair lady," was the reply; "but here comes Ned Cranbourne, and the work must be done with all despatch."

The little man advanced as Saville spoke, exceedingly hot and exceedingly out of breath. He evidently felt himself to be of extraordinary consequence. No American ambassador on the eve of a war with Europe could have thought himself a more important diplomatic agent than Cranbourne had done for the last two hours. His activity was great, his excitement most unusual, and his vanity exceeding.

He had run nearly the whole way to Cleve Court and back again, exulting in the idea that he was Captain Saville's only confidant, and there on his return, to his utter mortification, stood Robin Charlton, calm and cool, evidently dividing, if not disputing, his influence.

"You seem fatigued, sir," said the pedlar,

with what Cranbourne considered an insulting smile, whilst he wiped his face and forehead with his scented cambric handkerchief.

Ned attempted to laugh, but the sound only amounted to a gurggle in the throat.

"I suppose, Robin, you are as usual in search of news," he said, spitefully,

"I am ready to hear all you have got to tell me," was the old man's reply.

"I never betray my friend's secrets," answered Cranbourne, casting one of his eyes towards the Captain, in order to ascertain how much had already been divulged.

Saville was highly amused by the little man's evident jealousy of Charlton, and laughed without saying a word.

Robin looked at them both, with wonder and mistrust, and he marveled, that the discipline of misfortune, however severe, had not yet tamed the careless levity, subdued the impatience of contradiction, or quenched the passionate ardour which had been the bane of Saville through life.

"Robin is my old servant, and must know all we are going to do," said the Captain, addressing Cranbourne, when his mirth was spent, "we will tell him about the letter, and who it is to, but I won't ask his advice this time, I promise you. The sport is too good to be lost, though I know as soon as the scheme is explained, he will make a hundred objections to it."

This proved to be true. When Saville had written a letter, a portfolio on his knee serving as a table, and afterwards read it aloud, Robin positively refused to deliver it, as he was requested to do. He was even more annoyed than he dared to express, for his love for Major Saville and his daughter made him grieve, that the Captain should not only adopt a course which was unworthy of him, but seemed delighted to pursue it. He was grieved that Cranbourne, who though called a gentleman, was in fact a slave, with all the vices of servility, should have persuaded this reckless young man to take part in an intrigue which could do him

little good, and deviated far from the honest, straightforward dealing, which he at all times recommended to his young master. But the simple, honest, advocate of truth, whose rule was the law of God, which nature had interpreted to his heart, during his long marches and his lonely walks, had no chance of making his feelings understood by the self-willed man of pleasure, or by the slave of society, who desired nothing but to secure sensual enjoyments at another man's expense.

"You may say what you like," added Robin, after a long dispute, "but I always uphold that honesty is the best policy. What do you think Miss Emma will say, when she hears of such doings?"

Saville turned pale at this unexpected mention of a name, which, since his last interview with his cousin, he had endeavoured to forget, but Cranbourne replied sharply, "To my certain knowledge Miss Saville will be glad to see Miss Dillon's marriage broken off, and the lawyer proved a rascal as he is."

“ Well, well, I’ll say no more,” rejoined the Pedlar. “ The wilful must have their way, but be careful, Captain Saville, not to go too near the house, for information has been laid against you, and a strong party of revenue officers and constables is to be sent out against the smugglers, believing you to be one of them.”

“ The Captain can have nothing to fear,” said Ned, in a constrained voice, for conscious of his own share in this affair, he was embarrassed by hearing it alluded to.

“ We have said a great deal to little purpose.” continued the pedlar, “ like most people who take council together. I suppose you mean to deliver the letter, Mr. Cranbourne, in spite of my advice, so I can do nothing but try to mend the mischief you are intent upon making. I wish you both good day, and I pray you to remember, Captain Saville, that I had no hand in this matter, and don’t forget that there will be danger about the banks after dark.”

“ I daresay there is no truth in the whole story,” said Cranbourne, as soon as the old man

was out of hearing; and Saville laughed a wild and bitter laugh, not of mirth, but of despair.

"Hunted at last, like a beast of the field!" he said. "But you have surely some closet where you can hide me up at Cleve Court," he continued. "No constable would look for me there."

But though he listened for Ned Cranbourne's answer he heard no sound. The little man was so astonished and alarmed by this unlooked for proposition that for once in his life he was unable to utter a syllable.

"At all events," continued Saville, "you must procure me the key of the green door of the east turret, that I may be able to get into the house in case of need."

"It would be a dangerous experiment," murmured Ned.

"The more to my taste then," replied the Captain. "But cheer up, my old fellow, and don't be alarmed before you have even delivered the letter."

"Aye, the letter," said Cranbourne. "I

never offered to deliver it, for should Sir Charles discover it, this might get me into serious difficulties."

"I daresay it would. But you are in for it, my old fellow; there is no going back, I promise you!" cried Saville, giving Ned a tap on the back, which made him start. "Either you are Dillon's friend, or you are mine. Either you are under my grateful protection for the rest of your life, or we become declared enemies, and whenever I get the upper hand, as I infallibly shall, sooner or later, I shall send you packing with the whole gang of parasites, who have been living on the vitals of my family for the last ten years. Take your choice. Deliver the letter, as I desire you to do, or give it back to me instantly."

Cranbourne trembled like a hare closed in by the hounds, so that it has no longer room to double. He was unable to find a subterfuge.

"Captain Saville, you misunderstood me entirely," was all he could say.

Saville laughed.

"No, my good friend," he said, "you are not so difficult to comprehend. You were always fond of meddling, and now your curiosity has brought you into a scrape you don't quite like. But you had better depend on me than on the Dillons. I may be wild and reckless, but I am not a scoundrel. You understand me, therefore, give the letter. It will not be shown to Sir Charles you may depend upon it."

"Well, well," answered Cranbourne, "what is done cannot be undone. I will give the letter, this afternoon; that is to say, if I find that I can safely do so."

"I knew you would," answered the Captain, laughing. "And now promise to send me the door key. It used to hang in my father's dressing-room, and you can easily get it without its being missed."

"You shall have it," was the reply. "I will either bring it myself, or send it by a sure hand before night."

"You are a capital fellow, Ned, upon my soul!" cried the Captain. "If I only had you

six months under my command you would become as brave an old veteran as any in her Majesty's service. But let me ask you a question before we part: how does my cousin, Miss Saville, stand in the good graces of her uncle?"

"As well as the Dillons will permit her," was the reply. "The old gentleman seemed very fond and proud of her at first, and declared he meant to make her his heir."

"And what did Mr. Dillon say to this arrangement?"

"He said nothing, but he began to make love to the young lady."

"And does he openly address her?"

"Not very openly; but he fawns about her, and flatters her, and looks at her through his spectacles in his cunning way."

"And she encourages him—perhaps she loves him?" demanded Saville, with an impetuosity which amazed Cranbourne, but when he looked up in the Captain's agitated face he understood his feelings.

"She is too sensible a girl for Dillon to cheat

her with his wiles," replied the little man. "Moreover, I suspect, that her heart is already engaged. I am a keen observer. Few things escape me."

"And the object of Miss Saville's choice, is—?"

"Is a man, by no means worthy of her," said Cranbourne, finishing Saville's sentence. "He is a fellow of mean birth, of humble calling, of plebeian habits, and manners."

"I gave her credit for better taste," said the Captain, with assumed indifference. "What may be the name of this paragon of mediocrity?"

"Mr. Vaughan," cried Ned, disdainfully. "He is the village apothecary, with whom an alliance is certainly beneath the dignity of any daughter of your house."

Saville walked on some minutes in silence, and then said abruptly, "Vaughan may now be only a village apothecary, but you are mistaken if you suppose he is a despicable man. His habits, though singular, were never mean, and

he would be alike eminent for talent, and for virtue, in every sphere. If he lives retired from the world, it is from his own choice. He is a gentleman, in the best sense of the word, and was once my friend. He is deserving of my cousin's love, though it is a treasure which many men may envy him. We must now part, for I have to seek concealment till night."

"Now you will not forget twelve o'clock," answered Cranbourne, laying his finger on the side of his nose.

"Trust me, I never fail in such appointments," answered Saville, and with a slight salutation, he hurried into a neighbouring copse, leaving Ned, near a gate into the shrubbery of Cleve.


And there he remained standing for several minutes, lost in perplexing and uneasy thoughts. Then feeling if the fatal letter was still safe, in his pocket, he proceeded with slow and unwilling steps towards the house, bitterly reproaching himself for having wilfully got into a scrape, from which he saw no prospect of extrication,

except by plunging still deeper into the troubled waters of perplexity, which seemed rushing on to overwhelm the family of Saville and all connected with it, in a vortex of misfortune and ruin.

CHAPTER XIII.

As Emma Saville foresaw before she came to Cleve Court, her residence there had been the most unhappy passage of her existence. With its inhabitants she had no sympathy, nor did she share in their eager pursuit of vanity and pleasure, to the exclusion of higher and purer objects of interest. She felt that the Dillons were jealous of her, as the nearest relative of Sir Charles Saville, and that the favour hitherto shown her by the Baronet would soon be lost in the ascendancy of Lorry; but all this would have less pained her had Vaughan not been estranged from her at the very moment when

she had most need of the advice of a man of superior intellect and large experience. She had also to regret the loss of a cheering hope which her former intercourse with the surgeon had awakened in her heart—the hope that she might one day have the happiness to win his love. Her meeting with Vaughan in the Vicar's garden had revived all her former feelings in connection with him, and after parting with Mr. Ashley, instead of returning to the house, she lingered in the woods to recall in solitude the circumstances of their brief interview. She passed along the banks of a small rivulet, to a spot where it formed a natural cascade, over a pile of broken rocks. Here she often came during the heat of the day, and took a seat on a mossy stone, where a high and broken crag hung over her like a roof, equally defending her from the sun and the winds. A net work of slender roots, and ivy, and honeysuckle, hung around it, a fringe of nature's weaving, and the white sand and the drifted leaves on the ground were at all times dry.



A path led round the rock to a rude bridge, which afforded a short cut from Cleve Court to the village of Winside, but as the upper road was generally preferred, Emma had no fear of being disturbed, and lingered long, for the moving water gave a pleasant freshness to the air in this green and shady recess.

It was almost happiness when contrasted with the dreariness of her recent position, to recall the recent looks and words of Vaughan, and to indulge the hopes they had excited. But such dreams were not destined to be of long duration. In less than half an hour the sound of footsteps and the rustling of the bushes near her, made her spring from her seat, in order if possible to escape from any unpleasant intruder. The next moment, to her amazement, Vaughan himself stood in the path before her.

The surgeon started at this unexpected meeting with her who more than any other object occupied his thoughts, and the strong man turned pale, and his hands shook, before a word had been exchanged between them.

But Emma saw it not. With her eyes bent to the ground, she stood blushing and tremulous before him, conscious only of her own confusion and that Vaughan was there. She did not speak, neither did she attempt to pass him; she felt that if he then left her without a reconciliation, her heart must break.

"Miss Saville," said the surgeon, after a short pause, in a voice which betrayed his extreme emotion, "I flattered myself once that we were friends."

She made no answer.

"I have grieved," he continued, "that any estrangement should have interrupted our pleasant intercourse—"

"Without just cause," murmured Emma, as if concluding Vaughan's imperfect sentence.

"Without just cause," he repeated. "If such be Miss Saville's belief, I would gladly be convinced of it. She is just, and must admit that at least appearances were such as to justify any man coming to strange conclusions, unless those appearances could be satisfactorily explained."

"But if they cannot be explained at all?" rejoined Emma, who had now recovered her composure. "True friendship ought to have too much trust and confidence to allow appearances to excite suspicion."

"But the whole circumstances were so unexpected, so astounding, so bewildering," returned Vaughan. "When the light of my lantern fell on the face of that man, whom I had believed for years in the grave; when I saw him come from your door at midnight, and heard his passionate expressions, I was half maddened by surprize and suspicion. Then, when you refused me all explanation—"

"And I do so still," said the girl, raising her deep and earnest eyes with an expression of timid anxiety to his face. "And yet, Mr. Vaughan," she added, "if we are to be friends, your doubts of me must cease."

"They are already at an end," cried Vaughan, impetuously. "I have been foolish, passionate, and impatient. I had no right to demand explanations from you in justification

of any act of yours. I had no right to doubt the motives of your conduct, however strangely that conduct might jar upon my sense of right. I think as you do, there can be no friendship without perfect trust."

"And perfect forgiveness," said Emma, holding out her hand with a sweet, confiding smile. "You must trust me for the future, and I will forgive the past. If I were at liberty to tell you the whole story of the man you saw at my cottage, you would learn that I have done nothing which I have any need or wish to conceal on my own account, but the secrets of another are sacred, and even the most valued friendship must be sacrificed if it be necessary to defend them."

"You are right, Miss Saville," replied the surgeon; "and by your honest courage you cover me with shame. Instead of suspecting you of evil, I ought to have worshipped you for the noble generosity which made you risk even your own good name to preserve the secrets of

another, though Captain Saville may be little worthy of the sacrifice."

"He is my cousin," said Emma softly, "and perhaps as much sinned against as sinning; but, oh! Mr. Vaughan, if you value my friendship, do not betray the discovery you have made. There are reasons why my poor cousin desires that the story of his death should yet be believed, even by his father."

"I know his whole story," said Vaughan. "Dillon is his enemy, and brought accusations against him which must be disproved; and procured his outlawry, which must be reversed, before he can venture again to show himself openly in England. Be assured I would be the last man to betray him. We were at school together, and he in his wild manner has done me much friendly service. He was an only son, heir to a large fortune and a title, spoilt by a foolish father and mother, and all who surrounded him. It is sad to see how men worship even the heir to gold, though it can

never profit them. But Saville, though headstrong and passionate, was a kind-hearted, generous fellow, and had he been better guided, he might have brought honour, instead of disgrace, on his family."

"But surely, Mr. Vaughan, it is not yet too late to save him?" inquired Emma. "May he not yet be led to better courses and a happier life than he has hitherto enjoyed?"

Vaughan looked keenly and anxiously at his companion as she uttered these words, and he was again disturbed by a vague feeling of jealousy; but when he saw the pure and benevolent expression of her honest eyes he was ashamed of his suspicions, and felt humbled before the generous sweetness of her frank and kindly nature.

"When shadows have passed athwart a man's conscience in the storms of life," he said, "I fear no perfect happiness remains for him, but doubtless Saville may yet be rescued from much future misery."

"I would do it, if I could," returned the

girl, blushing deeply; "but you know, Mr. Vaughan, a woman's power in such a case is inadequate to effect her desires. My cousin's character renders it almost impossible for me to assist him; but as you once called him your friend, I will frankly beg your aid to save him."

"So long as you only love him as a cousin, I will assist your noble purpose at peril of my life," replied the surgeon with fervour.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Emma, and without adding more she took Vaughan's proffered hand and pressed it in both of hers.

"I have no wish but to devote my life to serve you," he said, as he passed his arm round her waist and drew her towards him.

The girl trembled from head to foot, and hid her face in her hand.

Thus they stood for nearly a minute; and without another word being uttered between them, they both felt that they were betrothed; that come what would, their destinies till death were for ever united.

It is folly to attempt to describe the happiness of such moments, Some have felt it, but none ever understood it from description.

Joy—unutterable joy seemed to press round Emma's heart, almost to suffocation, when she felt that she was no longer alone in the world, unloving and unloved, but at length possessed the affection of a loyal and noble-minded man, who would defend her from every danger, support her under every affliction, and sympathize with her in every joy.

Nor was Vaughan less happy, for he rejoiced not only that he had won the heart of the only woman whom he had ever truly and tenderly loved, but all the painful doubts of her perfection, by which he had recently been tormented, were for ever dissipated, and with full confidence he gazed at her as the worthy mistress of his soul and his affections.

They sat down together on a rustic bench beneath the hazels, and they talked of many pleasant things, which were little suited to any listener's ears, but which for them were of vital

interest. They agreed that their engagement should remain secret till Emma came of age, which would happen in a few weeks, and that Vaughan, in the meantime, should not pay her any attention, which might excite observation at Cleve Court. He even left her before she regained the gardens on her way thither, and Emma returned alone to the house.

There was a large party to dinner, and Dillon remarked that she was more lively and agreeable than he had yet seen her. He little dreamt that the cause of her animation was her happy engagement to the man whom above all others he dreaded and detested, the village surgeon, Mr. Vaughan!

END OF VOL II.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

6. The sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

